LIFE AND TIME

OF

JAIPRAKASH NARAIN

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PREFACE

The time of Jaiprakash Narain is as topical as Jaiprakash Narain himself. He was a tiny schoolboy when Mahatma Gandhi shifted the political battle from Africa to India, and ever since the young Leftist Leader—inspired by Gandhiji himself—has been in the thick of India's fight for freedom. Jaiprakash has borne the brunt of the political battle in the most momentous years, and the struggle of his youthful career is identical with India's breathless struggle for freedom.

This book paints the career and character of Jaiprakash on the picturesque canvas of an international political setting, India particularly and the world generally, during the most decisive years of the present century, 1914—1947. Such a task in such a small book could not have been accomplished without the process of extreme brevity. All well-known events have been only referred to and not detailed upon. Every word, sentence, paragraph or even a chapter, which could be omitted, has been meticulously done away with.

You are not merely going to glimpse through the biography of a young idol but also the life-story of a nation and the history of the world.

LAHORE : J. S. B.

Red March, 1947.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

SUNRISE OF SOCIALISM

The sunrise of socialism is one of the most captivating phenomena on the international horizon. Out of the clouds of capitalism has come an exquisite rainbow of roseate hopes to gladden the rayless hearts of poor denizens in dark and dingy chawls in the industrial cities from Moscow to Madras and from Manchester to Malaya. The statesmen of the world at last have realised that a labourer has the first claim to the fruits of the land, although there is yet a yawning gulf between the realisation and materialisation of a poor man's just claim. Socialism stands as a bulwark behind the nationalism of India, and it is to this bulwark that Shri Jaiprakash Narain, the hero of many battles with the forces of oppression, has brought forth a shoulder of mass movement.

The Politico-Economic Battles

Modern political and economic battles are not fought and won so easily by the sermons on the mount or even perhaps by the *Bhagwad Gita*. A clear-cut, specific, well-organised and well-designed programme is necessary for that.

Present is the age of anti-imperialism. Our main task in this age is to end imperialism and win national independence. But this should be real independence. Not a mere transfer of power from one imperialistic hand to another. It is gross mistake to believe that the elimination of foreign domination would end our ills and restore us to *Ram Rajya*. Foreign domination might go but grinding poverty and other social problems shall remain unsolved if the transfer of power is under the existing state of affairs. Age of national reconstruction should commence soon as the era of freedom dawns upon the Indian horizon. This can be done only on socialistic lines. Socialism alone can provide an ideal independence. Leftism is synonymous with anti-imperialism or socialism. There should be no compromise with imperialism and no wavering and vacillation in the struggle against it.

The Dash of a Devil

Mr. Narain has the dash of a devil in him. He is the one man who can say to the Goddess of Freedom, "I will defy even death to die for thee." Even the worst haters of this patriot will melt before the fire of his patriotism.

And out of this fire, Jaiprakash produced a golden link. It put India in its proper place in the chain of international events. India had forgotten food in its

fever for freedom. Now Mr. Narain acted as a stern reminder to the leaders that liberty, if it has any sense at all, must mean more loaves for the masses. Food must be looked upon as the goal as well as the first line of defence in a patriotic war. Bread is the be-all and end-all of the struggling masses. Hunger drives them on. And if freedom does not bring food in its train, it brings nothing for which the peasantry are flinging away their lives. The struggle for sovereignty must also be a struggle for socialism. Food, the main driving force, must not be divorced from freedom.

The Swaraj Party

In 1920, A.I.C.C. decided on the policy of boycott of councils. This was accepted and hailed by a majority of the nationalists and gave the country a new thrill. None of unprecedented political consciousness and enthusiasm surged over the masses throughout the country.

But with the suspension of the civil resistance movement after Chauri Chaura incident, council-entry programme came and crystallised itself in the formation of the Swaraj Party which received the recognition of Congress and in 1926 actually took charge of the Congress organisation. Its activities between 1922—30 are well known and need no narration. In 1930 on the instance of Pandit Motilal Nehru, the

leader of the Congress Party in the Assembly, the boycott of legislatures was resumed. From 1930 to 1934, the Swaraj Party remained in abeyance. Though it was not dissolved by any resolution of the Congress, nor did it dissolve itself by its own resolution, yet to all intents and purposes, during all this period and in early 1934, it was considered a dead body. There, however, remained still a body of Congressmen—though practically insignificant who did not like resumption of boycott and wanted the council-entry programme to be carried on.

With the virtual suspension of the civil resistance movement, a move was made by some of the pro-council-entry programme elements to revive the Swaraj Party. A meeting of the leaders was held in Delhi on 31st March, 1934, under the presidentship of Bhulabhai Desai. Forty delegates invitations to whom had been issued by Dr. M. A. Ansari attended.

Mahatma Gandhi's letter to Mr. K. M. Munshi was the origin of this leaders' conference. Invitations to the delegates had also been issued on the strength of the same. The letter expressed the opinion that , the decision of Poona Conference could not be altered till an honourable settlement was arrived at with the Government, but that those who wished to chalk out a supplementary programme should do so and that Gandhiji would wel-

come it. Assurance to the delegates, who doubted whether A.I.C.C. would approve of their decision that Gandhiji had no objection to it, was also given on the strength of the same letter by Dr. M. A. Ansari, the convener. "It would prevent political crisis in the country" was his opinion.

J. P. and Christ

The fault of Jaiprakash Narain is that he cannot put up with reactionary elements in the world. He will not go back. He cannot stand still. He must move on. He cannot be a diehard for hard-dying vested interests. He would rather die easily for the doleful and the down-trodden. He will gladly give up his breath for the poor. He will cheerfully shuffle off the mortal coil for those who are pining in the coils of the capitalistic boa constricter. Is this redness? If Narain is red, how red was Christ?

Shri Jaiprakash Narain is one of the two most colourful characters in the play-ground of Indian politics. His sole rival, of course, is Subhas Chandra Bose. The two death-defying patriots, have added romantic dare-devilry to the otherwise dull and doleful struggle for freedom. Yet Narain and Bose differ as much as the green earth from the blue heaven.

Unlike Bose, Narain had no colourful

beginnings. He did not belong to an aristocratic family. Even more than Mahatma Gandhi, out of dust came Narain. He is the son of a peasant, and has lived to devote his might, mind and money to the welfare of peasantry.

Only three persons earn their living honestly in the world, said Thomas Carlyle: a Peasant, a Soldier and a Scholar. Judging by this standard, our hero has lived his life most usefully. He has been a born peasant, a soldier of freedom and a scholar of matchless brilliance.

J. P. in America

Jaiprakash's life has been packed with varied activities. He has spent considerable part of his youth in America, where he alternatively worked in field and studied in the university. His broad international outlook, and training in Marxism, are the result of his stay in that country. Back home he devoted himself to the task of building up a socialist party in this country, and spreading the message of anti-fascism.

J. P. and Lajpat Rai

His adventurous life has a keen resemblance to that of another Indian patriot, Lala Lajpat Rai, who also imbibed a good deal of his radical ideas from his stay in America, but the Punjabi leader was not a socialist, nor the product of this epoch of anti-

fascism as Jaiprakash Narain is. In view of the story of this young man who has along with Nehru built up an anti-Axis front in India from 1933 onwards should stimulate resistance against the enemies of freedom.

Master of Escapades

In November, 1942, Jaiprakash Narain disappeared from Hazaribagh Jail. This story of his mysterious dash had all the thrills of escape of a French revolutionary from Bastille before 1792 and in our own time of some German anti-fascists from Hitler's concentration camps at Dachau. But this is only a chapter of his long Odyssey of life which contains many such adventures. Twenty years ago during the non-co-operation days, he had left India for America under similar mysterious circumstances.

Once there, he began to do hard manual work and during intervals when he had both money and leisure he studied in the university, thus combining two lives, that of the intellectual with worker like Lawrence of Arabia, who while he was not writing his *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* or translating Homer worked hard among Arabs, and build a new civilisation for the desert people.

Jaiprakash Narain faced a similar task of building up a new civilisation in India on his return from America in 1931. He had

returned from America with new hopes, and a new faith in Marxian philosophy. But faith alone would not have helped him. Many young men had come back from abroad with their youthful heads full of ideas, and a fire burning in their eyes, but soon those ideas had become stale, or had been reduced to mere arm-chair claptrap and the fire after flaring up for a while in tropical heat had become cold. The same might have been the lot of Jaiprakash Narain. He was placed in the Labour Research Department of the Congress by Jawaharlal Nehru and he might have remained there theorising about Indian labour problems, building up satistics and living the life of dry erudition of a Kuatsky without having the least contact with the struggle of the working class for power.

Early Life

Jaiprakash is the son of a farmer and was brought up in an atmosphere which breeds socialist outlook. He has known life at first hand, as Yusuf Meherally has put it. In America he had to work hard to make both ends meet. This poverty in early life has been the feature of life of such social democrat leaders as Ebert and Ramsay MacDonald, yet the socialist movement is none the rich for their contribution. The petty social democrat leaders stand no comparison with Jaiprakash. None of

them imbibed Marx as Jaiprakash did. Their sphere of work was not of the revolutionary workers, the miners, unemployed, or workers of colonial countries who faced the rigours of life under a foreign imperialism and a native capitalism. And above all they were products of a different time, raised high in a crazy decade in which anything could happen from the exchange of billion German marks at the rate of a dollar to the Englishmen, denouncing the French occupation of Ruhr, and themselves doing nothing to help the Germans in the launching of the greatest battleships, while the hunger-marches continued—all that was peculiar of the years 1920—30. Jaiprakash entered the working-class politics when the world had done away with such leaders and although Ramsay MacDonald continued to function as Prime Minister he was shorn of much of his former power. The socialist-minded people and the workers had no use for opportunists. In several countries socialism was no longer associated with social democracy. The gradual rise of Spanish Socialist Republic was proving that. So it would not do to compare the early life of Jaiprakash with that of Ebert or Ramsay MacDonald. It was essentially revolutionary, at first nationalist during non-co-operation days and then socialist after his return from America. In one sense it was more analogous to that of the

leaders of the socialist and communist parties in Spain, England and France. Caballero, the Spanish socialist leader, Maurice Thorez, the French Communist Party General Secretary, and Harry Pollit, the British Communist Chief, who rose to power in the years following 1931 had all had working-class origin and it is with them that we can compare Jaiprakash's early life.

Jaiprakash, now a legend to many, went as a poor student to California where he had to work on a fruit-farm to collect money to pay for his university education. Earlier, he had given up college in India during the Non-co-operation Movement and had sacrificed a university scholarship. Life at California was expensive, and Jaiprakash had to move to Iowa and from there to Wisconsin University. It was here that the seed was sown which on his return blossomed in the shape of the Congress Socialist Party. Illumination came from a teacher at Wisconsin who initiated him into the socialist doctrine. His eight-year stay in America was not devoid of adventure, and when he returned to his mother country, Jaiprakash had already seen life at close quarters having been a farm worker, a jam factory packer, a mechanic in an iron concern, a restaurant waiter, and finally a salesman. Soon after his return to India in 1929 Jawaharlal

Nehru placed him in charge of the Labour Research Department of the Congress. In 1932 he became Acting General Secretary of the Congress during the Civil Disobedience Movement. It is doubtful if Pandit Nehru introduced in higher Congress circles a more active live-wire than Jaiprakash Narain. His imprisonment followed immediately, and in Nasik Jail where he was kept he drew up with his associates, Messrs. Achyut Patwardhan, Ashok Mehta and others, what subsequently proved to be the blue-print of the Congress Socialist Party, which really came into birth when Jaiprakash was released from the Nasik Central Prison in 1933, though formally it was not till a few months later that the party was formed at Bombay. Jaiprakash's imprisonment in the Deoli Concentration Camp, his leading the hunger-strike there, Mahatma Gandhi's reply to Government who had published a letter alleged to have been smuggled by Jaiprakash, his transfer from Deoli Camp to Hazaribagh Central Jail, and his subsequent disppearance from it during the "Quit India" Movement of 1942, the Government's reward of Rs. 5,000 later raised to Rs. 10,000 for his arrest, and then his apprehension under dramatic circumstances with Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia in Nepal, his escape with the help of revolutionary guerillas, and then again

his final arrest in the Punjab and the tortures to which he was subjected in jail have all the elements of a romantic story.

Since there is so much confusion in regard to the aims and objects of the Congress Socialist Party, and rival parties are coming into shape to save the Congress from a doomed future should the socialists succeed in capturing it, is well to restate them in the language of its foremost leader. The more important of them are transfer of all power to the producing masses ; state control and state planning of country's economic life, socialisation of key and principal industries (*e.g.*, Steel, Cotton, Jute, Railways, Shipping, Plantations, Mines), Banks, Insurance and Public Utilities, with a view to the progressive socialisation of all instruments of production, distribution and exchange ; state monopoly of foreign trade ; encouragement and promotion of co-operative and collective farming, adult franchise on functional basis ; elimination of princes and landlords and other class exploiters without compensation ; and repudiation of Public Debt of India. Of course, the ultimate basis of distribution and production of economic goods is to be the Marxist doctrine " to every one according to his needs and from every one according to his capacity."

It is not difficult to pick holes in

the socialist blue-print of Jaiprakash. Particularly, it is so where he states the Marxist doctrine "to every one according to his needs and from every one according to his capacity". This is now fairly exploded and unless "needs" have some relevancy also to the "service" rendered, the doctrine no longer holds good. As the spear-head of a growing and important party within the Congress, to whom Jaiprakash times out of number affirmed his loyalty, it is only natural that his views should differ radically from Mahatma Gandhi and that they should conflict with the opinions of more orthodox followers of the Mahatma. But his patriotism and motives are unquestioned, and only the future can tell to what extent his views coloured and ripened by Western books and materialism will assist India in obtaining that social justice for which he stands.

CHAPTER TWO

A CHALLENGE TO GANDHISM

Mr. J. P. Narain is in revolt against Mahatma Gandhi just as a sturdy little kiddy sometimes feels in revolutionary spirit against the knee of his daddy. In the same affectionate spirit Father Gandhi has received and repulsed little invasions from Jaiprakash and his Socialist Party. Gandhiji has not taken to heart the challenge of these young leaders and has rather tried to guide them into proper channels.

The Socialism of Gandhi

Gandhiji is also no doubt a socialist in a measure. But he is what is known as the "Christian Socialist". And hence he is not of much use to the masses. Christianity and capitalism have long been wedded. Therefore, Christianity and socialism go ill together. Their marriage sounds almost ironical. And Mr. Narain's political dare-devilry has lit up this irony so that all who have eyes may see and all who have ears may hear. Economic exploitation is biting into the bones of the masses. The present economic structure is a house of tyranny for most of the people. And

nothing short of a revolution can save them. The revolutionary must strike at the roots of this unequal and uneconomic system of society.

So far as the economic problem is concerned, the Congress has only proved itself to be a debating club, and has willy-nilly played into the hands of the capitalists. Beyond the ken of *khadi* and *charkha* Gandhiji is not prepared to undertake or permit anything. A vigorous lead on the socialistic lines could industrialise the country even to the negation of British masters. But the Mighty Mahatma has neither mood nor mind nor might to embark upon big plans. Pompous phrases alone cannot feed the starving peasantry.

The milk-and-water socialism of the Karachi Session was a red rag to the Red Fugitive. But even there he could not give vent to his wounded feelings. The Gandhites had their heyday of life. The whole show was theatrically funny. The Karachi Resolution was looked upon as the step of the communistic giant. But it was only the ghost of communism. It was for Jaiprakash to set the ghost at rest. The British Government had to close his mouth. He called it a "meaningless programme". And Father Time has proved how meaningless it was!

But imprisonment gave Jaiprakash food for thought. It was of course red

loaf for the red leader. He was not going to swallow Gandhism, like Byron, with biscuit and soda-water. Coming out of the purgatory, Mr. Jaiprakash Narain engineered the citadel of the Congress Socialist Party. He cut himself off from every dog which hitched itself to Gandhism. He ceased to be the horse of the high power. He still drove the Congress High Command. But he did not drive them to destiny. He only drove them to desperation.

The Surrender of Gandhi

The other factors which helped Jaiprakash were the debacle of Civil Disobedience Movement in 1933 and the growth of parliamentary tendency in the Congress. The effect of the surrender by Gandhiji on the younger generation of men who had been influenced by the economic and political restlessness since 1929 was profound. It may be compared with the betrayal of Ramsay MacDonald in 1931. That blow shattered the unity of the Labour Party, the younger section going over to the communists and the socialist league and the other section trudging a dreary parliamentary path, with a little over fifty Labour Party men in a house of over six hundred. The same story was repeated here, though in this case the Congressmen with Vallabhbhai Patel

to organise them did not cut such a sorry figure in the Assembly. But in spite of this successful coup of the right in Congress, the bitterness among the people as a result of Gandhiji's surrender could not be removed. It was one thing to make the loyal party men dazzle with the coup. It was another to convince the intelligentsia that Gandhiji's surrender was only a wise political move which only a statesman of Mahatma's ability could make. It was not difficult, therefore, for men like Jaiprakash to rally the opinion of the people against the new move of the Congress leaders.

There is little doubt about it that the Congress rightists shared the contempt of Jaiprakash Narain for such parliamentary institutions but they had nothing else to do in order to whitewash Gandhiji's surrender. In this way they played into the hands of the socialists.

This anti-parliamentary trend among the people which Jaiprakash made use of distinguished him from the social democrats of the previous decade. The socialism which he represented would have nothing to do with a parliament in which all the people were not represented, and which had not the powers to give political and economic freedom to the people. This was not the attitude of the European social democrats. They took every ad-

vantage of the smallest parliamentary freedom to further what they called the interests of the working class. It was only after the Social Democratic Party was shattered to pieces by Hitler that the socialists in Germany realised the dangerous futility of a parliament which could not make sweeping socialist reforms.

Where J. P. and Bose Differed

Jaiprakash and his party had certain differences with Subhas Bose. Shriyut Bose had criticised the socialists in his book, *The Indian Struggle.* But though he did not subscribe to all their socialist doctrines, he was generally in agreement with them. His views about fascism and Nazism did not matter much then, because he had not organised "Samavadya Sangh" in India, but only decided on converting the Congress to his view with the help of his followers and as far as they could go, the socialists.

Where J. P. and Gandhi Differed

Jaiprakash strongly criticised the Congress leaders. The climax was reached when it was decided that on the Independence Day, January 26, 1940, in addition to the old pledge the new fad of Gandhiji should also be accepted as an article of faith by the people. Jaiprakash did not like the new pledge. Whereupon Gandhiji in the

columns of the *Harijan* in a language half-threatening, half-appealing—the sort of stuff Pope Pius XI might address to Mussolini about some Lateran dispute or Archbishop of Canterbury to Edward VIII about Mrs. Walis Simpson—remonstrated with Jaiprakash. He wrote:

"Shri Jaiprakash and Shri Sampurnanand have spoken in no uncertain terms against the addendum to the pledge to be taken on the 26th instant. I have great regard for them. They are able and brave and have suffered for the country. I should count it a privilege to have them as companions in arms. I should love to win them over to my view-point. If the battle is to come and I am to lead it, I should not be able to do so with half-convinced or doubting lieutenants."

Dealing with the statement of Jaiprakash, Gandhiji wrote:

"Shri Jaiprakash has done well to clear his mind and the Socialist Party's position. He says of the constructive programme. We have never accepted it as the only or even as an adequately effective weapon in our struggle. . . . Our views regarding these matters have remained unchanged. Rather they have been strengthened by the helplessness of the national leadership in the present crisis.

"If the majority of Congressmen entertain the view that Shri Jaiprakash pro-

pounds on behalf of the Socialist Party, I can never hope to lead such an army to success.

"He has no faith either in the programme or in the present leadership. I suggest to him that he has quite unconsciously discredited the programme he would carry out merely 'because the nation's high command desire it.' Imagine an army marching to battle without faith in the weapons to be used and in the leaders who have prescribed them. Such an army can only bring disaster to itself, its leaders and the cause.

"If I were in Shri Jaiprakash's place, and if I felt able te tender discipline I would advise my party to remain indoors and silent. If I had my way I would invite every student to remain in his school or college unless he got leave or the principal decided to close the college or school in order to take part in the celebration. I should give similar advice to the workmen. Shri Jaiprakash complains that the Working Committee has given no details about the work to be done on Independence Day. I thought that, with the programme of fraternising and *khadi*, there was no need for detailed instructions. I should expect Congress committees everywhere to arrange spinning demonstrations, *khadi*-hawking and the like. I observe that some committees are doing so. I had expected committees to

make preparations from the day the Working Committee resolution was published. I shall measure the strength of the nation's response not merely by the *khadi* sales throughout the country."

The advice to Jaiprakash Narain to remain silent is a typical example of Gandhiji's anarchism. It differs from Western anarchism in that it is not militant but there is no doubt about it that it is disruptive for society and the antithesis of socialism to which Jaiprakash has dedicated all his life. It should be remembered that after Subhas Bose's election Gandhiji indulged in a similar attempt at disrupting Congress by saying that it was his defeat and that the rightists should come out of the Congress. We have noticed how Jaiprakash tided over the crisis then. Now once more he displayed his political acumen and refused to walk into the trap of Gandhiji. He let the Independence Day resolution be read as the Congress leaders wanted though the socialists everywhere made it clear that they differed from the programme preached in the resolution.

J. P., Bose and Gandhi

Although Subhas Chandra Bose did not subscribe to all socialist doctrines, he was generally in agreement with them. He welcomed the measures of reform put forward by the socialists. Jaiprakash was

not tardy under the Congress ministries. He did not sit over the fence while the steam-roller of vested interests rocked itself onward. He was able to get useful bills for tenants passed through the Legislative Assembly in Bihar and U.P.

The outbreak of war in Europe threw India in a political whirlpool. The struggle for leadership within Congress paled into insignificance. The British announced with the blare of trumpets that they were fighting for democracy. The Congress wanted to put these declarations to test. The result was a tug-of-war between Britain and India. The Russo-German Pact came as a rude shock to Jaiprakash. An alliance between capitalism and socialism was unthinkable. And yet it came. But the Russo-German war removed the cobweb of misconception from the minds of believers. In trying to win over Jaiprakash Narain for the battle ahead, Mahatma Gandhi paid a magnificent tribute to his genius—and that of Shri Sampurnanand.

"I have great regard for them," he said. "They are able and brave and have suffered for the country. I should count it a privilege to have them as companions in arms. I should love to win them over to my view-point. If the battle is to come and I am to lead it, I should not be able to do so with half-convinced or doubting lieutenants."

Jaiprakash, however, was not destined to play the part of Mahatma Gandhi in the battle that lay ahead of him. He was arrested on the eve of the Ramgarh Congress. It was a great blow to the forces of nationalism. Mahatma Gandhi himself received a great shock.

"The arrest of Shri Jaiprakash," he said, "is unfortunate. He is no ordinary worker. He is an authority on socialism. It may be said that what he does not know of Western socialism nobody else in India does. He is a born fighter. He has forsaken all for the sake of the deliverance of his country. His industry is tireless. His capacity for suffering is not to be excelled."

CHAPTER THREE

NINETEEN HUNDRED AND THIRTY-ONE

The year nineteen hundred and thirty-one was a year of an acute politico-economic crisis all over the globe. Swift changes, almost at a lightning pace, happened all over the world. Hitler scambled to power in Germany. Mr. Hoover, the President of America, shook before the industrial deadlock. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald let down the Labour Government in England. And Mahatma Gandhi faced a rising tide of leftist elements in the Indian National Congress.

Political Situation in 1931

Nineteen hundred and thirty-one was a fateful year in the history of world and of India. The crisis in capitalist society in 1929 had brought revolutionary changes in the political situation in every country. Social democracy and liberalism which had been given a new lease of life during the years of political optimism after the war had failed to deliver the goods—in England, in Germany, in France, everywhere the socialist and liberal parties lost ground and ceased to be a living force in politics.

It became clear that for a socialist party, in order to live, it was necessary to be militant in outlook, believing in all the implications that were inherent in revolutionary theories of Karl Marx. After having hitched their wagon to Marx, it was open to the socialists to either merge in the communist party or remain out and allied to it in all important matters of political action. The socialist parties in Austria, Spain and Mexico assumed such a political complexion and survived the crisis. In the latter two countries, they later on took control of the State and ruled for a long time.

In France the Socialist Party of Leon Blum trailed on for some time in miserable way till 1936, when it allied itself to the communists and became active in politics only to suffer eclipse again when on the outbreak of war it became avowedly anti-socialist and was dominated by the Conservatives of M. Daladier type. In England the Labour Party which has always fought shy of calling itself a Marxist party was ended by becoming a back number to Churchill and is no more socialist than Churchill himself is.

Thus only three parties emerged triumphant after 1931—the Conservatives, the Nazis or fascists and the Marxian socialists and communists. The triumph of these parties in various countries was hastened by

mistakes of their rivals, and certain national characteristics peculiar to their nation. The Germans had a Nazi Government in 1932, the British a Conservative and the people of Spain and Mexico turned towards the socialist parties of Caballero and Gardenas respectively. These militant socialist parties in Spain and Mexico were helped not only by a reaction against fascism but also by the existence of a feeling of bitterness towards the parties of the left, the anarchists and the communists. In 1931 there were people in several countries, who did not want to join the anarchists or the communists, yet were prepared to join any socialist party which did not go to the extremes the communists or the anarchists went. It was this element among the workers and the middle classes which strengthened the socialist parties in Spain and Mexico. A similar condition existed in India. Here social democracy had never had any trial. Instead there was the "Christian Socialism" of Gandhiji, communism and conservatism. A voice for such a midway socialism between Gandhism and communism had been raised by Nehru at the Lahore Congress. But that voice was lost in the racial passions that were aroused against the British after the Lahore Congress, and in the struggle which ensued in 1930, the issue of socialism was relegated to background and nationalism was strident

everywhere. In 1931, when Jaiprakash returned to India, tempers had somewhat cooled. Gandhi-Irwin Pact had been signed, the struggle against Britain was for the time being shelved and people were in a mood to debate socialism and working-class problems.

India, Germany and Spain

In Spain the socialists realised it, at about the same time, that republic and the Cortes, as they were constituted in 1931, could not work, because the conservatives and vested interests still dominated them. A fresh struggle and revolution were necessary. It was brought about there in October, 1934.

This realisation, which came to the socialists in Germany and Spain after the struggle with fascism, dawned on Indian socialists in a different way—as a result of the struggle with British imperialism. The civil disobedience of 1930—32 had convinced Jaiprakash that the parliamentary institutions offered by Britain were a sham. The parliaments could not be given by a foreign government as a gift. They were born out of the efforts of the forces of nationalism and organised working class. What India needed was such a strength and a unity between the organised workers and the progressive nationalists. The nationalists could be progressive only if they remained

with the working class, if they organised them, and organised themselves into a strong socialist party. This was what his reading of Marx told him. And this was what his own experience, as the son of working class, in the nationalist struggle of 1930—32 confirmed. The workers needed a party. The nationalists needed an idea which could sustain their faith in nationalism. Jaiprakash was both a nationalist and a working-class man. His heart went out to the working class and to the nationalists —both without a party, without a leader, without any faith. He gave them all the three. The workers had a party. The nationalists, a leader and a faith. The party was called the Congress Socialist Party. The leader was Jaiprakash and faith was socialism.

The Nationalist Party

Mr. M. S. Aney and Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya organised a new party known as the Nationalist Party on July 31, 1934. The object of this party was to combat the Communal Award. It in fact was itself founded on communalistic basis. It condemned the Communal Award as a grave wrong had been done to the Hindus. The speeches of some of its members actually smacked of religious intolerance and religious prejudice against the Muslims and in favour of the Hindus. Instead of easing the

communal tension, the new organisation complicated and worsened it.

The First Socialist Conference

It was the realisation of these problems and facts that gave rise to the formation of socialist parties in the country. The socialists within Congress also considered seriously the proposal of forming a party with Congress, to exercise its influence on the general organisation and to make it adopt a socialist programme. Particular condition in the country described elsewhere precipitated the formation of it. The first All-India Socialist Conference was held at Patna on the eve of the A.I.C.C. meeting. The decision to form an All-India Congress Socialist Party was taken. It was formally inaugurated at Readymoney Terrace, Worli, Bombay, on October 20, 1934. Much wild and unjustified criticism was levelled against it. To those who still hugged belief in sentimental appeals as a result of their inability and failure to diagnose the nature of weakness, it appeared to be splitting the Congress. They made capital out of it and tried to prejudice the uninformed sections of Congress against it. They even appealed sometimes in plaintive terms to preserve the national solidarity.

The first All-India Socialist Conference was held at the Anjaman-i-Islamia Hall Patna, on the eve of A.I.C.C. session, on

May 17, 1934, under the presidentship of Acharya Narendra Deo of Kasi Vidyapith. It was attended by over hundred prominent delegates from all parts of India. Majority of the delegates were against the newly revived Swaraj Party. They however were not all no-changers. Nor did all of them have the same attitude of hostility towards the question of council-entry. Bombay socialist group, for instance, had openly accepted the electoral activity as part of the socialist programme, and on that programme carried the Bombay Congressmen's Conference with them recently. Nevertheless majority of them had been disturbed by the revival of the Swaraj Party. The principal object of the Conference also was to decide the attitude to be adopted and the role to be played by the socialist delegates in the A.I.C.C. session to be held the next day.

Grave issues and problems confronted the country. The Civil Disobedience Movement was practically finished and withdrawn. Only a formal cancellation of it remained to be announced. This too was to be announced by the A.I.C.C. the next day. The Swaraj Party had been revived and had decided on the programme of council entry. Joint Parliamentary Committee had published its report and made it the target of country-wide criticism in India. Change or no change? Compromise or no compromise? Council entry or

boycott? These were the widely divergent and alternative issues before the country. The Swaraj Party had already given its verdict in favour of change, compromise and council entry.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE GIANTS OF SOCIALISM

Mr. Jaiprakash Narain is not the be-all and end-all of socialism in India. The Socialist Party of India has many small giants who of late have come into prominence on account of their escapades from the clutches of the British police. And among them is the bright, bold and beautiful figure of a naughty little schoolgirl—Aruna!

The first open session of the All-India Congress Socialist Party was formally inaugurated, was held at Readymoney Terrace, Worli, Bombay. It commenced on October 21 and concluded on October 22, 1934. It was attended by over 150 prominent Congress Socialist delegates from all parts of the country. They included Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia of C.P., Mr. Marcrarenes of Bengal, Mr. Jaiprakash Narain of Bihar, Babu Sampurnanand and Mohan Lal Gautam of U.P. and Messrs. Achyut Patwardhan, Masani and Desh Pande of Maharashtra and Mrs. Kamla Chattopadhaya of Bombay. The welcome address was delivered by Mr. Purshottam Dass Tricum Dass while the conference was presided over by Babu Sampurnanand.

The political atmosphere in the country

was stuffy and unhealthy at the time. The White Paper based on the Joint Parliamentary Committee report had upset the balance. Opinion about the report was divided in different schools of thought. The nationalists regarded it as nothing short of death-warrant while the reactionary elements were jubilant over the concessions that had been conceded to them. It was a charter of slavery. Policy of divide and rule was practised skilfully, systematically, and ruthlessly. Different communities were separated and put into watertight compartments. There was no tangible transfer of power to the masses and still to neutralise whatever even there was, this device had been resorted to. The Federal Scheme was even more hopeless. The country had actually been forcibly dragged to the thirteenth century. Medieval policy of mixing up of religion with politics was revived. The Communal Award was sent down with all its grace or otherwise. Naturally there was an uproar of protest against the proposed constitution from all parts of the country.

Aruna Asaf Ali

The only heroine of the Congress, the Congress Socialist Party and the Quit-India Movement of 1942 is Aruna Asaf Ali. She has excelled her illustrious husband in winning a warm popularity among the masses,

and her name is a household word. She has a passion for helping the poor people of the Indian states in releasing them from the bondage of feudalism.

"The Indian state rulers are laying down a new Monroe doctrine to isolate their territories from the surrounding British territories in order to continue their rule unhampered," said Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali, addressing the pressmen in Bombay on her return from Hyderabad where she had gone to acquaint herself with the state of affairs there consequent on the decision of the Hyderabad State Congress to boycott the reforms initiated by the Nizam Government.

Continuing she said that the Indian states were giving a communal twist to the movements in the state and forming a confederation of states to sabotage independent sovereign republic in India, as envisaged by Pandit Nehru.

Here is an interesting account of Aruna's recent visit to Lahore:

Dressed in her white *khadi sari* and wrapped in a *pashmina chaddar*, Aruna quietly walked into the room and smilingly acknowledged greetings of the standing journalists.

She read out a statement, in which she said, she was going to Kashmir on a study tour and would also visit the Hyderabad State.

A journalist asked: "Would you be free in time from both the tours for going to America?"

"I have no intention to leave India, for the present, for I wish to continue my work here. I may go to America when I can snatch some time for a holiday."

Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali, amidst laughter, added: "But you could have asked this question in a straight way."

Then began politics. While pleading that the Interim Provisional Government should call upon the civil and military administration and the people of India to declare their allegiance to the sovereign authority (which designation she suggested for the present Constituent Assembly), instead of the King, Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali added: "If in that act of assuming sovereign authority and establishing complete control the constituent authority is met by violence from the British and their satellites it should be prepared to meet that violence by violence. It will have to do that." She felt that the British satellites will side with their old masters, but there was nothing to be afraid of.

When asked if the army would side with the Indian Government Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali felt convinced to be able to say that majority of the Indian army would side with the patriotic elements of the country, for to the majority of the Indian

army the reality of British rule is a daily pin-prick. She was convinced that the Indian army was thoroughly anti-British though some might go over to side with the forces of reaction. For forcing sanctions Mrs. Aruna pointed out that they must keep in view the line of I.N.A. to which every Hindu and Muslim will flock.

Regarding the question of interpretation of the Cabinet Mission's statement concerning voting by group or majority votes Mrs. Aruna referring to the background of the Congress acceptance of office said that Congress President had made it clear at Bombay that the Congress was not bound by any interpretation which might be given by the British to the issues. She felt that whatever suited British was done and said. It suited them to, what they had called "clarify" the issue today and thus checkmate the serious and dangerous attack on British structure in India which had been made by the Interim Government.

Dealing with the attitude of the British Government Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali said: "British socialists preach socialism at home but preach imperialism abroad."

The British were now trying to entangle them into what she described as "procedural traps so cleverly laid by them."

The Congress she asserted was fully alert and was prepared for another struggle

as had been hinted at by Pandit Nehru when he spoke of the "valley of shadows".

Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali felt that there was a conspiracy between the British Premier Mr. Attlee, Mr. Churchill and Mr. Jinnah the former two being unwilling to part with power and the third unwilling to let the British withdraw from India as a result of some inferiority complex. The League leader seemed to feel insecure without British protection. India, however, (the masses anyway) she asserted was prepared to meet the British challenge. Answering a question Mrs. Aruna said that she did not expect Mr. Jinnah to side with any progressive forces for he had always withheld co-operation, or remained neutral or had exhibited a state of suspended hostility. She added, "In our struggle against British rule Mr. Jinnah will be on the British side unless he chose to be neutral which to me is a remote possibility for at every critical stage of India's struggle for freedom in recent years Mr. Jinnah had always sabotaged and is doing the same today."

Describing the "call for ulsterisation of India" as impracticable Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali maintained that none of them had any personal quarrel with the League or its leader, there was no pettiness on their side. In fact on politics they could contest each other. But she was sorry to say that

Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League want British to remain. If, however, the League and its leader would adopt the socialist programme she said she would welcome that change and would become sympathetic towards the League. While maintaining that the country was prepared for any struggle and unless the powers which had been held out to them were fulfilled the masses might rise and even overthrow the present leadership. The masses were united in the name of religion and their feelings inflamed but they certainly seek freedom and do not want to be befooled.

In her statement regarding the state of affairs in Kashmir and Hyderabad Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali said:

" A democratically elected independent sovereign and republican form of government should be the common aspiration of all Indians living under the rule of petty monarchs who have every right to demand a totally republican government and liquidation of the Princely Order. Socialist Britain is permitting its agents in Indian states to unleash forces that are bent upon denying them even elementary civil liberties. It has proved again that even if it practises socialism at home, it stands for imperialism abroad.

" The Political Department tacitly supports its puppets, the rulers, in their lawless campaigns against the people. Freedom and

the fight for freedom are equally indivisible. The states' people are everywhere astir. Their struggle is the part of the national struggle. Indian rulers and their overlord, the Crown Representative, would do well to recognise the unity underlying the freedom forces. India has not forgotten, much less forgiven, insults suffered to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru when he visited Kashmir in the month of May, 1946. Prime Minister Kak has not only not been dismissed, but has been allowed to intensify the repressive measures against the National Conference and the people of Kashmir. We cannot remain indifferent to the grave situation that exists in Kashmir, Hyderabad and other states.

"Praja Mandals and states' peoples' representatives must have our assurance that they will receive all the aid they need for strengthening their struggle against medieval forms of tyranny. They must however remember that their success depends ultimately on their own vitality and capacity to suffer. I hope, I shall be able to help the Kashmir National Conference workers in their work.

"The Hyderabad Government has also forfeited the people's confidence. Martial law conditions prevail in some districts. On concluding my tour of Jammu and Kashmir I shall proceed to Hyderabad to study the conditions there and help the

State Conference workers."

"Mobilise your pen, which is as strong as a sword these days, for the establishment of a socialist state in India," said Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali while speaking to the Punjab University class of journalism before her departure for Jammu.

"Capitalist junta in the country is out to purchase the brains and the pulses of the nation with a view to utilise them for the exploitation of the masses," she added.

Mrs. Asaf Ali further said: "The journalists class of the University must put out at least 50 per cent of the working journalists who should not barter away their potentialities and should not be enticed away by the magnet of money but should fight for their principles and revolutionise the age-old mental subservience of the society and the nation to which they belong."

J.P. and A.P.

"P" as second initial seems to be a magic letter. T.P.O' Conner is of course the classic illustration. For long decades "Tay-Pay" had unique popularity in the British Parliament and the British press. In the Indian press "C. P." at one time became nearly as familiar for the present Dewan of Travancore. That was in the good old days of Mrs. Besant and the Home Rule League. On a far smaller scale an ex-Food Member enjoyed this advantage when he

took over *The Pioneer* and to the staff of that paper was known as "J.P.". I do not mean to compile a comprehensive catalogue: that "J.P." inevitably leads on the musing to the other owner of the "P" talisman in the Socialist Party—for Achyut Patwardhan has now come to be known as "A.P." to his comrades. At the moment I believe among the Congress Socialists he is next to J.P., the most important figure to reckon with—though I must add this ranking in no way means that Acharya Narendra Deo does not continue to enjoy the respect and veneration that as a veteran and a scholar has always been shown to him, and that in the inner council Purushottam Tricumdas's influence will no whit diminish. The return of J.P. and A.P. is a great event in the left wing politics.

It is a somewhat paradoxical bit of news that at the "welcome" meeting in honour of A.P.'s reappearance in Bombay, the chairman of the occasion, Purushottam Tricumdas, had to point out that the B.P.C.C. refused to have anything to do with it. If it is merely a sectarian interpretation of *ahimsa* that actuated this boycott a freebooter naturally finds it difficult to swallow the ethics which permit Congress leaders including Azad and Nehru to be so ardent in their welcoming back Mrs. Asaf Ali but does not let the organisation associate in the welcome to A.P.

CHAPTER FIVE

JAWAHARLAL AND JAIPRAKASH

Jawaharlal has come closer to Jaiprakash than any other Indian leader. And he has given an unstinted support to the cause of socialism in India and abroad. From Lahore Congress (1929) to Haripura Congress (1938), Jawaharlal was the most brilliant political star of India and the Congress Socialist Party basked in the light of his patronage.

Jawaharlal and Socialism

Pandit Nehru had erstwhile vigorously supported the cause of socialism. The Government had banked on communalism, while Nehru had preached communism. The Congress was earnest in embarking on a struggle for independence. And independence lit up the eyes of young patriots like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. His presidential address at Lahore revealed the innermost springs of his vision. The world was passing through an economic slump. The international depression shook the very foundations of capitalistic regime. Capitalism had failed on both sides of the Atlantic. There was a dollar depression, a franc failure, a sterling sterility, and a mark morbidness. The

international currency was taken seriously ill. Not even the rupee escaped its rabidness, nor yen its yellow fever.

India is only a link in the world chain and the period between 1929—31 which elsewhere saw the death of social democracy and liberalism, in India was the period of reaction against Gandhian "Christian Socialism." People in India had begun to ask themselves questions when they saw the capitalist structure tottering in Europe. When they read of "hunger-marches" in London, the falling gold standard, the increase of the unemployed in Britain and America, they asked why were these things happening there? If freedom meant bread for all, why the British, the Germans and the Americans, who were free in their countries, had food queues, unemployed, and hunger-marches? Once again it reminded us of the famous lines of Shelley:

In countries that are free,
Such starvation cannot be,
As in England now we see.

Surely Swaraj is much more than what Gandhiji had been telling us it is! Freedom is not enough. There was something wrong with the economic system too. It must go.

The Faizpur Conference

In spite of the unanimous opposition offered to the new constitution at the Faizpur Conference no uniform programme was

adopted. While in most cases the socialists abstained from direct participation in elections, only giving moral support to Congress candidates, at several places socialist candidates were set up and in U.P, a socialist, Sampurnanand, became Minister of Education. The general strike of April 1 proved to be a tepid affair as the Congress had already decided on office-acceptance and the socialists had willynilly accepted its decision. The working class thus had no enthusiasm in the general strike merely as a demonstration. Just as in France the general strike on December 1, 1938, which aimed at a demonstration against the Daladier regime proved to be a flop, for lack of revolutionary action to back it, the April 1 general strike in India did not have the support of the entire working class. As a political manœuvre it failed to have the effect the previous anti-office propaganda of the socialists had. Fact was that somersault of men like Sampurnanand had created utter confusion in minds of people. After the Delhi Convention, together with Jawaharlal Nehru, the socialists had to retrace their steps.

The Gandhites had achieved sweeping success everywhere, both Nehru and the socialists had helped them.

" It isn't socialism " the socialists might have said when the verdict of Delhi Convention was made known. To this the rightists

might have replied, "True, but it is not April, 1936."

From Negative Opposition to Positive Criticism

So after the Delhi Convention, Jaiprakash had to change the programme of his party from one of negative opposition to office-acceptance to that of positive criticism of the Congress Ministries whenever interests of the working class were involved. At any other time this sort of compromise would not have mattered. One could always say that national unity demanded it and after all the socialists had all along stressed the need of national unity. Jawaharlal Nehru had agreed to the decision of office-acceptance putting forward national unity as the main plea. They could do the same. But as has been observed, divisions had crept into the ranks of the socialists and one of them had become a minister. All this made things quite difficult for Jaiprakash. Another disturbing feature for the socialists was the emergence of the communists in the political field after remaining in oblivion for three years. The formation of Congress Ministries had encouraged the communists to leave the dugouts and though they could not function as a political party because the ban on them had not been lifted, they became quite prominent. In Bombay and U.P. they were able to capture several trade

unions, and through them and through their sympathisers in public, they voiced their demand for lifting of the ban. The governments of several provinces even went so far as to recommend to the Central Government that the ban on the Communist Party should be lifted.

Socialists and Communists

The communists benefited from the various divisions inside the Socialist Party. Just as in 1934-35 the socialists had their day and won over several dissident communist elements, so in 1937 the communists stole the thunder from the socialists by capturing the working-class organisation and the youth and students' federation.

The Congress parliamentary programme of 1937 had created as much dismay among the youth as the surrender of Gandhiji in 1933 and the subsequent parliamentary activities did—then the socialists absorbed the revolutionary unrest, now the communists were the masters af the situation everywhere and communism among the students was quite a rage. Again the situation in India in 1937 had a remarkable resemblance to that of Spain after the Franco retreat near Guadaramma. There the communists gradually emerged as a strong party, and although the socialists remained numerically strong, the communists predominated in International Brigade, and due to their

superb discipline and organisation made up for the deficiency in their numbers. The Indian Communist Party lacked any Passionaria or Jose Diaz, it was poor in leadership, but even so it benefited at the expense of the socialists.

Nehru, Bose and J. P.

The strength of the socialists inside the Congress and the All-India Congress Committee had remained undisturbed due to the election crisis and the emergence of the Communist Party. It was this strength which induced Jaiprakash to favour Subhas Bose as candidate for Haripura. With the end of second term of Jawaharlal Nehru, the socialists were again in danger of being without a leader of front rank to guide them. True, Jaiprakash had earned immense popularity but he was no match for the Gandhites who had been in the political field much earlier than he, and had made a place for themselves. Only Nehru and Subhas Bose could claim to have popularity equal to these rightist leaders. But Nehru's popularity was being overshadowed by that of Subhas Chandra Bose, who had burst into headlines after his prolonged banishment from the country. He was the old enemy of the Congress High Command who had crossed swords with them long before the Socialist Party came into being. In 1937, he represented the popular reaction

against Congress leaders. Gandhites by reviving the old slogans of the swarajists had captured the votes, but the mass opinion, always revolutionary and susceptible of slightest influence, was swung by Subhas Chandra Bose. The Congress Ministries had only recently assumed office. The doubts of the people were not allayed. Subhas Bose was bold enough to voice these doubts. People believed that in his hands their destiny was safe. Besides they valued his past sacrifices. The socialists who were themselves for constructive criticism of the Congress Ministries welcomed the move of Bose and helped him to get elected. Jawaharlal Nehru's influence on the Indian socialist movement was too deep to be effected by his ceasing to be the President of the Congress. He still remained a source of inspiration to socialists and a protagonist of their cause but his nostalgia for foreign affairs was there and as the Congress Ministries settled down to work, Nehru thought of how best to help the cause of socialism in Spain and China. Of Indian socialists Jaiprakash because of his foreign training was very sensitive to happenings in foreign countries, and on his initiative the socialists did act for Spain and China. But to Nehru internationalism meant much more. Besides being an independent individual without formal association with any political group, he had greater leisure and

energy to think on these matters. He turned to them with much zeal and enthusiasm when the pressure of home affairs was not there. Such was the state in 1937-38. The struggle with Britain had ended and though the work of the Congress Ministries needed a vigilant eye, it was nevertheless a breathing space for Congress.

J. P. as Internationalist

The vision of Shri Jaiprakash was not confined to the Indian horizon. He chewed the international politics with the appetite of a political glutton.

The vigilant eye was kept by the socialists whose gaze was as much fixed on Wardha as on Barcelona, Madrid and Chungking. Suhhas Bose also wanted the ministries to function well. Hence the working alliance between him and the socialists.

It would be a mistake to characterise the socialist attitude as only backing up of the winning horse. As in the case of Nehru, both sides benefited from this alliance. Moreover it was a natural climax of the new trend in the socialist policy. That trend was towards left nationalists as opposed to the communists. So far the left nationalists had been mainly absorbed by the Congress Socialist Party; with the coming of Subhas Chandra Bose, the left nationalists had gathered round his banner and though not organised in a bloc, followed them.

CHAPTER SIX

THE CONGRESS FLAG AND THE RED BANNER

In the spring of 1938 two flags came to drink the waters of Five Rivers in the Punjab. One was the Congress Flag. The other was the Red Banner. Both were brought to the banks of the Ravi by one and the same organisation—the Congress Socialist Party! They carried the both as the right and the left eye of Mother India.

For the first time in the history of the Punjab the Congress Flag and the Red Banner were hoisted side by side by Mr. Jaiprakash Narain on the occasion of the fourth annual session of the A.I.C.S.P. held at Lahore in the spacious *pandals* in the Municipal Gardens on 12th April, 1938, under the presidentship of Mr. M. R. Masani.

Explaining the reason for hoisting the two flags together Mr. Jaiprakash Narain said, "There is no difference between the two flags. Their main object is to strengthen the fight for freedom. There used to be differences over the two flags but gradually we understood that the fight for freedom should be carried on under one flag and that is the Congress flag. It is wrong to say that the socialists do not respect the Congress flag. In fact

we are fighting the battle for independence under Congress flag and under the red flag we are spreading socialism."

Munshi Ahmad Din, the General Secretary of the Punjab Provincial Congress Socialist Party, read out the welcome address as the Chairman of the Reception Committee and described the work done by the Provincial Socialist Party. Over 75,000 Kisans had been enrolled as the members of the Peasants Committee and trade unions had been formed in ten districts. The work was splendid indeed, taking into consideration the short period during which it was accomplished, *i.e.*, only six months.

Mr. M. R. Masani delivered a notable presidential address. He reviewed the history of the Congress Socialist Party from 1934—39 and declared that the abolition of private property and evolution of a classless society was the essence of revolutionary socialism.

Continuing he said, "I would say that the basic conceptions underlying our creed are those of equality and liberty. It is necessary to emphasise this because it is these tests which differentiate genuine socialism from the bastard socialism—the national social (Nazi) or other spurious brands. And this genuine socialism is what the C.S.P. stands for."

The resolutions adopted at the Lahore session of the party were few and unimpor-

tant, excepting the one relating to the amendment of the constitution and appointment of the members of National Executive. There were only two resolutions of note. The one moved by Mr. Achyut Patwardhan expressing party's vehement opposition to the Federation and asking the party for the assistance of the Indians in East Africa.

There was also another resolution reviewing the work of Congress ministers and congratulating Trade Union Congress and National Trade Union Federation at their emergence into one organisation namely the All-India Trade Union Congress. The second important resolution was that of Professor Ram Manohar Lohia about the international situation and asking the Congress to profit from it and plan its programme and policy accordingly.

In the amended constitution the number of the members of the executive committee was increased from 12 to 17. The system of retaining five supplementary members was given up.

National Executive of the party was formed as follows: General Secretary, Mr. Jaiprakash Narain; Joint Secretaries, Messrs. M. R. Masani, Dinkar Mehta, E. M. Namboodiripad and Yusaf Meherali; Members, Munshi Ahmad Din, Mrs. Kamla Devi Chattopadhaya, Acharya Narendra Deo, Achyut Patwardhan, Professor Ram Manohar Lohia, Mr. Siva Nath

Bannerjee, Gunada Mazumdar, Sh. Satyavati, Asok Mehta, Kamla Shanka Pad, Seth Damodar Swarup and Sayyad Zaheer.

CHAPTER SEVEN

IDEALS OF FREEDOM

Jaiprakash Narain drafted a magnificent resolution for the Ramgarh session of the Congress. It embodied the ideal of freedom. And was underwritten by the consent of Mahatma Gandhi. The author of the resolution was arrested by the British Government, but no Government can arrest the ideals of freedom. Consequently the soul of Jaiprakash marched on, even though his body was behind the bars. For patriots :

"Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage,"

and it was not long before Jaiprakash escaped from the Hazaribagh Jail.

Ramgarh Congress

Jaiprakash Narain was arrested some time before the Ramgarh Congress. His arrest was a great blow to the anti-fascist front in the country. The emotional Gandhi had been so much impressed by the attitude of the socialists towards him that on his arrest he made the following statement in the *Harijan :*

"The arrest of Shri Jaiprakash is unfortunate. He is no ordinary worker. He

is an authority on socialism. It may be said that what he does not know of Western socialism nobody else in India does. He is a born fighter. He has forsaken all for the sake of the deliverance of his country. His industry is tireless. His capacity for suffering is not to be excelled. I do not know what speech has brought him within the law. But if 124-A or the highly artificial sections of the Defence of India Act are to be unspanned for catching inconvenient persons then any person whom the authorities want can be easily brought within the law. I have said before now that it is open to the Government to precipitate a crisis if they wish to. They have every right to do so. But I have hugged the hope that the fight will be allowed to develop along its natural course so long as it keeps strictly non-violent. Let there be no camouflage. If Shri Jaiprakash Narain is guilty of violence, violence should be proved. What the arrest has done is to make the people believe that the British Government want to force the issue. History will then have repeated itself. During the first civil disobedience the Government had forced the issue by arresting Ali Brothers. Is this arrest a pre-arranged plan or is it blunder committed by some overzealous officer? If latter, it should be set right."

A few days before the Ramgarh session was to take place Jaiprakash sent the follow-

ing resolution to be adopted by the Congress. Gandhiji published it in his paper and commented favourably upon it :

"Out of the catastrophe of the European war, thoughtful minds everywhere are anxious to create a new world—a world based on the co-operative goodwill of nations and men. At such a time the Congress considers it necessary to state definitely the ideals of freedom for which it stands and for which it is soon to invite the Indian people to undergo the utter most sufferings.

"The free Indian nation shall work for peace between nations and total rejection of armaments and for the method of peaceful settlement of national disputes through international authority freely established. It will endeavour particularly to live on the friendliest terms with its neighbours, whether they be great powers or small nations and shall covet no foreign territory. The law of the land will be based on the will of the people freely expressed by them. The ultimate basis of maintenace of the order shall be the sanctions and concurrence of the people.

"The free Indian state shall guarantee full individual and civil liberty and cultural and religious freedom provided that there shall be no freedom to overthrow by violence the constitution framed by the Indian people through a Constituent Assembly. The State

shall not discriminate in any manner between citizens of the nation.

"Every citizen shall be guaranteed equal rights. All distinctions of birth and privileges shall be abolished. There shall be no titles emanating either from inherited social states or the State.

"The political and economic organisation of the State shall be based on principles of social justice and economic freedom, which this organisation shall conduce to the satisfaction of the national requirements of every member of society. Material satisfaction shall not be its sole objective. It shall aim at healthy living and the moral and intellectual development of the individual. To this end to social justice, the State shall endeavour to promote small-scale production carried on by individual or co-operative effort for the equal benefit of all concerned. All large-scale collective production shall be eventually brought under collective ownership and control and in this behalf the State shall begin by nationalising heavy transport, shipping, mining and the heavy industries. The textile industry shall be progressively decentralised.

"The life of the village shall be recognised and the villages shall be made self-governing units, self-sufficient in as large a measure as possible. The land laws of the country shall be drastically reformed on the principle that land shall belong to the actual cultivator

alone and that no cultivator shall have more land than is necessary to support his family on a fair standard of living. This will end the various systems of landlordism on the one hand and farm bondage on the other.

"The State shall protect the interests of the classes but when these impinge upon the interests of those who have been poor and down-trodden, it shall defend the latter and thus restore the balance of social justice.

"In all State-owned and State-managed enterprises the workers shall be represented in the management through their elected representatives and shall have an equal share in it with the representatives of the Government.

"In the Indian states, there shall be complete democratic government established and in accordance with the principles of abolition of social distinction and equality between citizens there shall not be any titular heads of the state in the persons of rajas and nawabs.

"This is the order which the Congress envisages and which it shall work to establish. The Congress firmly believes that this order shall bring happiness, prosperity and freedom to the people of all races and religions in India who together shall build on these foundations a great and glorious nation."

Thus it is clear that Shri Jaiprakash Narain was thinking of India as part of the

world and not apart from it. He was building for a New World and New People. "Co-operative Goodwill" was his dream on which he put up towering castles of idealism. Therefore, he requested the Indian National Congress "to state definitely the ideals of freedom for which it stood." He did not want these divine dictates of international brotherhood to be clouded over by the dust and din of victory or defeat. A clear head means clear action. And clarity has all along been guiding principle of Noble Narain's outlook on politics and patriotism. He wanted India to be free so that India could act and react as a free nation among free nations, and help in accomplishing an era of golden peace. Notwithstanding his socialism and "red" outlook, he was thinking in terms of the "total rejection of armaments." Thus it is clear that his socialism was Indianised and spiritualised.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE ROMANCE OF SECRET LETTERS

Love letters are always secret and always romantic, but nobody ever heard of a halo of romance overhanging a dull diplomatic correspondence. Yet such is the case about the letters supposed to have been written by Jaiprakash in the Deoli Camp. And the romance of the romances is whether the letters were written at all! Even though the author is large at liberty, alive and kicking, he has maintained the silence of the grave about the controversy that has raged between the press and the Government several years back.

The Deoli Camp

Jaiprakash was in prison when Mahatma Gandhi launched his Civil Disobedience Movement. It was only a pin-pricking affair. Jaiprakash, detained at Deoli Camp, was not satisfied with the half-hearted effort of Mahatma Gandhi for national independence. The moment called for a more vigorous action. The Government transferred all the socialists and communists to the Deoli Camp so that they might think together. It was probably the intention of the Government to win them over to the

Allied cause. And the Government did get succeed in its aim to some extent as it is clear from the attitude of the Communist Party of India since then. The Congress socialists under Jaiprakash Narain, however, declined to make any truce with British imperialism.

The Government was successful at Deoli in widening the gulf between the socialists and communists. The "secret" letters of Jaiprakash, which they published, served the purpose remarkably well. It was an exceedingly clever device to push forward the wheels of war-effort. The Deoli Camp brought out the independent character of the Socialist Party. They could not line up with socialists abroad. The British attitude stood in their way. Consequently, the socialists of India ploughed in a lonely furrow.

The Bastille at Hazaribagh

Then Jaiprakash was transferred to Hazaribagh Jail. It was there that he made good his escape. It was veritably a fortress built for hardened criminals. Escape was no easy matter. To get out of Hazaribagh Jail was like getting out of Bastille. And yet Jaiprakash did get out.

The "Secret" Letters

On October 16, 1941, the Government of India published "secret" letters of

Mr. Jaiprakash Narain:

"Plans to consolidate the position of the Congress Socialist Party by winning over important members of the terrorist organisations known as the Revolutionary Socialist Party and the Hindustan Republican Socialist Association and by isolating the Communist Party were seized from Mr. Jaiprakash Narain, Security Prisoner, Class I, the Deoli Camp, when he attempted to pass them to his wife, Prabhavati Devi, at an interview." Mr. Narain is said to have stated that an underground wing should be formed to attract the youth of India. It will acquire funds by the "old method."

Mr. Jaiprakash Narain emphasises the political need for a clear distinction between the Anglo-German and the Russo-German war.

"Our attitude should be," he is supposed to have said, "that we sympathise fully with Russia, but are helpless to do anything about it. At the same time our opposition to Britain's war and our national struggle must continue, and also our class movements."

The document is said to reveal a programme of secret activity. A Kisan struggle in a selected area in contrast with the "farce of satyagraha" is strongly advocated. Mr. Narain lays down, if the letters are not fabricated, because their origin has been hotly challenged, a method for transmitting

secret letters to him through the bars.

"Take an old book with thick binding, tear the binding off, place the letter there, get the book bound again and send it. With two or three others a novel of Premchandji should be sent. The binding of this book should contain the letter, or the letter may be sent inside the binding of any other book and the mark of 'plus' should be made on page 100 with pencil. I will open the binding of the book which is marked with the plus sign."

The Government *communique* gives a detailed account of communists, Congress socialists and terrorists through the "secret" letters of Mr. Narain. He is alleged to have expressed concern at the work of consolidation carried out by the Communist Party within the Deoli Camp.

"There are two important factors in it," he is said to have written. "One that the (Punjab) Kirti Kisan Party (Sikh Communists) here has merged itself with the Communist Party. (All the Kirti leaders are here.) This is not the first time that the Kirties have joined with the Communist Party, and one cannot be sure that the unity will survive the camp."

Of the Communist Party Jaiprakash Narain is said to have stated that their "attitude and behaviour are extremely hostile and extremely childish."

According to the Government revela-

tion, Jaiprakash is alleged to have condemned non-violence.

"You must do something to bring out the party's independent political line in contrast with the farce of satyagraha."

"Till the invasion of Russia we have looked upon the war as an imperialist war. We were, therefore, opposed to the war and were endeavouring to utilise it to attain our freedom. To help Britain in the war is not the same thing as to help Russia. Help to Britain would only strengthen imperialism. Therefore, the invasion of Russia cannot in the least affect our attitude towards Britain's war. The question remains: Can we do anything to render direct aid to the Soviet, without helping in any manner British war efforts?"

"The British Government," Mr. Narain is alleged to have stated, "have already announced that they are united with Russia in their common aim of destroying Hitlerism and have offered all help to the Soviets. This opens up an opportunity for us to offer direct help to Russia and also, incidentally, of putting British professions to test. Let us, accordingly, put it to the British Government that we are anxious to help Russia with men, money and materials, and that we desire to be given the opportunity to organise help. We should further put it to them that, if they are sincere about aid to Russia, our offer gives them an excellent

opportunity to vindicate it. In making our offer it should be made clear to them that our opposition to their own war would continue unabated."

All this smells of British propaganda. The origin of the "secret letters" has been hotly debated by the national press and the responsible leaders. It is just possible that a clever hoax has been played upon the Government by clever fabricators, who have made a clever attempt to raise themselves in the eyes of the British Government and to feather their own nests. Nevertheless, the remarks of Jaiprakash concerning Russia are highly significant. These have a ring of magnificent sincerity about them. The danger which faced Russia was a question which as socialists it was their duty to consider seriously. "With all its faults Soviet Russia is a giant fortress of world socialism and of the world proletariat. We cannot sit quiet when this fortress is under assault. But we shall not bring succour to it if we rushed to the aid of British imperialist forces."

If Mr. Narain was really the author of those letters, he has made a prophetic remark about Russia: "In any case, if Russia desires to destroy Nazism, it must in the end depend upon its own resources and strength."

The subsequent events of war in Europe proved it to be amply correct. Russia had

to fight alone and upon its own legs before the second front was opened in Europe, and even then Russia played its full part in its race for Berlin.

But are these letters authentic? That is the most thorny problem. First, there is a great deal of stuff in these letters, which is quite superfluous, and a prisoner is not likely to bother about it. Secondly, there is a considerable element which smells of clever British propaganda to strengthen the hands of officials engaged in war-effort in India. Thirdly, there is a clever attempt to bring about a rift between the socialists and the communists. Fourthly, there is a touch of artificiality in the letters, lacking natural style and expression. No wonder, the "secret" letters issued by the Government were followed by a crop of counterblasts. The best thing would have been to publish facsimiles in order to bring the debate to the end, but the Government authorities did not push the matter forward in order to bring it to a natural conclusion. Hence, it must be left to the historian to establish their truth or falsehood.

How J. P.'s Letters Were Seized

Interesting details about the dramatic escape of Comrade Jaiprakash Narain from the Hazaribagh Jail (Behar) along with his four associates and the interception of his, now well-known, letters by a C.I.D. official

of Deoli Detention Camp, have just come to light, through one of his trusted lieutenants. These stories provide a clear index to the sublime character and passionate patriotism of the hero of the 1942 movement.

Feeling an urge within himself that he should not allow himself to stagnate in this fashion, but should resume some contacts with the world outside Deoli Camp, Jaiprakash Narain succeeded in hypnotising a subordinate official of a junior cadre, attached to the camp, for sending out instructions to his party men outside for starting work.

He wrote down a few letters and planned to send them out through that clerk.

The camp, which was inhabited by about 150 political suspects from all provinces of India, was practically a military camp, solely in charge of the C.I.D. establishment. It was situated 80 miles from Ajmer and 64 miles from Kotah Junction of B.B. and C.I. Railway. The relatives of the detenus could interview them on two consecutive days. A C.I.D. official knowing different languages spoken in India used to be present at the interviews.

Big Envelope

In accordance with the plan a big envelope, containing letters from Comrade Jaiprakash Narain, Munshi Ahmed Din and

Master Mota Singh Anandpuri, was handed over to that clerk for safe delivery to Mrs. Jaiprakash Narain, who was waiting outside for the second-day interview with her husband. When no acknowledgement, as settled, was received by the sender, suspicion grew amongst themselves against the clerk. Eventually J. P. received an intimation about the non-delivery of the "valuable" documents. When the "official" messenger was caught hold of and threatened with dire consequences, he said that he could not effect the delivery of the packet, owing to the C.I.D. surveillance. He, however, returned that envelope to Jaiprakash Narain quite intact.

Jaiprakash did not sit idle over it. He was keen that his instructions should reach the desired quarters, as he thought that it was the psychological moment for carrying out those plans into action. He thought that he could deliver the envelope himself at the time of the interview with his wife who was then summoned telegraphically for an urgent interview. She did not know the errand for which she was being called so suddenly.

Jaiprakash tried to pass over the envelope to his wife, from beneath the table, at the time of the interview. Mr. Bannerjee, the C.I.D. Sub-Inspector from Behar, who was present at the time of interview, on hearing the sound, suspected and

jumped off his seat. He tried to snatch the envelope but failed. J. P. also could not succeed in destroying the envelope, despite his best efforts. Both grappled with each other. A regular scuffle ensued. The C.I.D. official shouted and invoked the assistance of a military sentinel on duty, with whose help, Jaiprakash was deprived of his "valuable documents", as he called the envelope.

Jaiprakash was produced before the Superintendent of the Camp for the breach of the Jail Rules. Lt.-Col. Christopher, superintendent, scolded him for his conduct and ordered that his interviews and letters should be stopped for a couple of months, adding that no further punishment would be awarded to him, if he undertook not to repeat such a thing in future.

"I am a professional law-breaker. I do not respect your laws. I am in jail for this very purpose. I have been breaking the laws outside the jail and would not hesitate to break them again, whenever an opportunity occurs. I am prepared for the consequences," was the reply given by Jaiprakash to the warnings of the jail officials. Similar punishments were also awarded to Munshi Ahmed Din and Master Mota Singh Anandpuri.

Jail Conference

After a private conference between the

various jail officials, it was decided to stick to the punishment already given and forward all the relevant papers, including the document itself, to the Governmnet of India, for further action, if deemed necessary. This incident occurred in July, 1941, and on 17th October, 1941, some portions from those letters (not the entire text) were released for publication to the papers all over India. This was done, according to the detenus, only to sobatage the threatened hunger-strike, scheduled to take place on the 22nd October, 1941.

The detenus in the camp did not get their copies of the daily newspapers containing the above publication, which caused a flutter in the camp. Jaiprakash Narain was summoned by the Superintendent of Jail to his office. After intimating to him that the Government of India had published his letters, the Superintendent of Jail brought home to him the fact that the publication in question had exposed the communists before their countrymen, adding that there was an apprehension of their wreaking vengeance upon him in some dastardly fashion. Jaiprakash was further intimated that arrangements had been made for shifting him to a separate corner of the camp, fenced with barbed wires, etc.

"I would face all consequences for my honest convictions. I will stick to my post and remain with my friends. I refuse to be

segregated. The letters contain nothing but private instructions to my colleagues for carrying out work outside. I am prepared for all eventualities." This spirited reply was given by Jaiprakash to the second warning of the jail officials regarding this episode. The daily papers, which had been held back for a couple of days, were then delivered to the detenus, who read with keen interest the various comments on the publication of the letters.

The socialist detenus had to commence their hunger-strike on the 22nd October and their communist comrades in the camp, on the following day.

Mr. S. V. Ghate, communist leader (Madras), apparently excited by the event stated that they would wash the blot alleged in the letter with their blood, after hunger-strike unto death. The communists however gave up their hunger-strike after 15 days and soon raised the slogan of "people's war" and thus washed the blot with their, action.

CHAPTER NINE

THE FLEET-FOOTED FUGITIVE

Jaiprakash will live in Indian history as one of the most successful political fugitives in India. He seems to have learnt the art of escaping scientifically in America or elsewhere. In contrast to the creed of jail-going, Mr. Narain has taught Young India the Irish ideals of jail-escaping. After all there is no heroism in simply going to jails. What we are struggling for is freedom and not thraldom.

It was characteristic of J. P.'s dare-devilry, cool and level-headed planning and sense of drama, and underground technique that he escaped from jail on Diwali day when scores of earthen lamps were burning brilliantly in that imperialist dungeon, Hazaribagh Jail. A memorable deed—a memorable day.

The story of Jaiprakash Narain's escape from prison, his underground work, and consequent arrest is a record of unique courage, great adventure, suffering and sorrow. It has its dramatic touches—now tragic, now romantic, now heroic. His restless soul could not lie low and idle and he began to think of running away from prison to the outside world where lacs of people

were participating in a life-and-death struggle for freedom.

Thus writes Mr. P. D. Tandon :

"One day I accompanied J. P. from Allahabad to Benares and requested him to give me the details of his escape from prison. He blushed a little and said, 'It is all about me and it is difficult for me to advertise it.' 'Thousands of your countrymen will like to know the way you came out of the prison despite severe watch and the perils that you took in the hazardous venture. You cannot deny them the pleasure of knowing these things about you,' I said. J. P. ultimately yielded to my persuasion and here is the authentic account of his escape, underground life and consequent arrest."

A Memorable Deed

"The night was dark and the stars were twinkling in the sky. In the solemn stillness of the night J. P., Jogendra Shukla, Ramanandan Misra, Suraj Narain Singh, Gulab Chand Gupta and Shaligram Singh "the prisoners of war" became free men and walked ahead to dream, to plan, to suffer and to fight for India's independence."

Rehearsals of Escape

"J. P. had taken about ten persons into confidence. Six of them were to run away from the jail, and the rest were to stay on

in the prison to supervise the escape. Days in and days out they rehearsed their plan. When they felt they had mastered the process and made fool-proof arrangements they decided to say good-bye to their friends. J. P. told me that when they rehearsed the act it was estimated that it would take not less than ten minutes for the six of them to get out, but on the day of escape the whole thing was done only in eight minutes. Before leaving the cell they arranged the beds, spread the mosquito nets and unfolded the *kambals* on the cots in such a way as to create the impression that they had gone to bed. A table was fixed to the wall and a rope of *dhotis* flung across half of it hanging inside the prison wall and the other half outside it. To dodge the warder on duty it was decided that he should be engaged in conversation when the plan was to be executed. It was done according to plan. The warder was smoking and chatting with the prisoners about Diwali, while J. P. and the comrades scaled up the wall with the help of an ingeniously improvised ladder—a ladder made of a table and human backs."

All the inmates of Hazaribagh Jail, both prisoners and jail staff, were engaged in the celebration of Deepmala festival and a drama was staged inside the jail premises to mark the occasion. According to a well-planned scheme, all this was being done

in one side of the jail, while Jaiprakash Narain and his associates were busy in giving final touches to their plan of quitting the jail, for accelerating work outside.

Ever since his repatriation to his own province after the abolition of the Deoli Camp, Jaiprakash Narain was constantly brooding over the idea of organising his and his friends' escape from the jail, with a view to work for the liberation of his motherland, at this psychological moment in the history of the world.

Political prisoners were free to move about in the jail. The daily counting of prisoners inside the jail was not done in case of political prisoners. They had hit at a plan and decided their course of action.

When the entire jail staff was concentrating their attention on the preparations of the stage for the drama, Jaiprakash Narain, along with B. Ramanandan Misra (one of the biggest landlords of Bihar and a brother of the Rani of Benares), Comrade Suraj Narain Singh, Babu Jogendra Shukla and another companion succeeded in escaping from the jail after scaling the big walls with the aid of ropes.

As decided beforehand, they were received by a number of comrades at a distance from the jail gates and escorted to a safe place. After staying there for a few hours, they left for their respective places for the fulfilment of their mission.

In this connection it will be interesting to note that certain "patriotic" Indian pilots came to J. P.'s rescue two or three times by carrying him to his destination in the Royal Air Force 'planes. Some of these pilots, who were later taken into custody, are still believed to be behind the bars.

The climax of this interesting episode was reached when the jail officials came to know of the escape of J. P. and his companions three days after the actual happening. It so happened that the Superintendent of the Jail had to communicate some orders of the Central Government to J. P. A warder, who was sent to summon him, returned with the news that J. P. was not inside the jail. The Superintendent of Jail treated it as a joke and reprimanded the servant for his impertinence. Another warder, who was then detailed, brought a similar reply.

The Superintendent of Jail was at his wit's ends. He immediately went inside the jail and raised an alarm signal. It transpired that not only J. P. but his four companions were missing from their barracks.

A telegraphic report was sent to the Government of India as a result of which both the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent of Jail were suspended. Both of them were prosecuted in a court but were discharged and reinstated.

After his escape J. P. roamed about in

all the provinces in the country issuing directives to his party regarding the August 1942 movement.

March through Jungle

Dhoti and *kurta* were discarded in favour of shirts and shorts. A small bundle containing a *dhoti*, some grams, and some change was kept ready for journey. In the heat of excitement the six musketeers forgot to take this bundle, and cleared out of the jail in less than ten minutes, leaving behind *chappals*, *chadar*, *chana* and change. On they went into the fields and forest where not a word was heard, not a noisy note, the whole night they walked. J. P. found it very uncomfortable to go bare-footed on a road which was strewn with little stones and thorns. His old trouble, sciatica, added to his difficulties. After 24 hours of trek through the forest of Jharkhand the pain at times would become so acute that he had to stop in the way and occasionally his comrades Saligram and Shukla carried him on their backs. It took them three days to cross the jungle and they remained practically without food. At times they fed themselves on *Karaunda Ber* and *Makoi*—these fruits of jungle. They had nothing to sleep on, but at night they would quietly stretch themselves under a tree away from the road, collect dry twigs, burn them to keep themselves warm, snatch little sleep, and soon

after the march to freedom would be resumed. After getting out of the forest, they divided themselves into two groups and went in different directions for the assigned tasks.

From Pillar to Post

J. P. had gone far away from the jail and it was only at 10 a.m. the next morning that the jail authorities woke up to realise that six messengers of freedom had winged their way to the outside world. A hectic search was made and warders hysterically ran helter-skelter in search of J. P. and others. Immediately the district authorities rushed to the jail and the Provincial Government was apprised of the incident. Police guards and other officers rushed to forest to capture the runaways. An æroplane search was also made and the whole area was combed ; but by that time J. P. was out of the wood and out of the woods. The bureaucracy of Bihar was on trial, and so was J. P. J. P. triumphed and they failed to trace him.

After J. P.'s escape the jail authorities had become very strict and the remaining comrades had to undergo many inconveniences there. J. P.'s wife, Prabhadevi, who was in another jail was asked to sleep inside the cell after the J. P. episode. Panic had gripped the bureaucracy. J. P. told that he was very sorry that for his actions

other comrades were penalised. But how could he help it ?

In Guise of Villager

J. P. passed through Gaya and Arrah and reached Benares where he contacted some friends. The journey from the forest to Benares took about fifteen days and most of it was covered on foot. This strain and suffering had considerably affected J. P.'s health and he became weak. He grew a beard and often went to villages. During his tours he stayed with shopkeepers and took bath in rivers. There he looked a typical villager—a *danda* in his hand, a dirty *dhoti* tied up above the knees, an unclean *kurta* flowing down the calves and a dirty *chadar* wrapped around his head. He had not known a *dhobi* for several weeks, and, at times, his clothes stank. Describing his difficulties during village marches he said, " Villagers are inquisitive and they asked me all sorts of embarrassing questions. On some occasions I was at my wit's ends. They enquired about my name, my father's name, my occupation and names of relatives and all that. Those questions were at times not easy to answer and I was afraid that some of my replies might create suspicion in their minds and that might lead me to difficulties."

J. P. wandered from city to city, contacted workers, instructed them, organis-

ed them and charged them to keep the members of the 1942 rebellion burning. After about two months he shaved off his beard and took to European costume. He used *salwar* at times to pass off as a Muslim and then his name was Rahman. J. P. could abscond and work for so many months because he is a supreme strategist in the technique of revolutionary planning. Bose and J. P. can be ideal planners of a movement or a revolution. He has the knack of utilising various elements for his purposes.

Escape from Nepal Jail

Yet another story about the adventures of Comrade Jaiprakash Narain, after his flight from Hazaribagh Jail, and culminating in his rescue from the Nepal Jail, has just come to light.

At a conference held between Jaiprakash Narain and his comrades, all of whom had successfully escaped from the jail, it was decided that Jaiprakash Narain should train a batch of regular guerilla fighters to be styled as "Azad Dasta" (Independent Battalion). Other colleagues were allotted organisational duties. With this object in view, Jaiprakash arrived at Nepal borders after encountering innumerable difficulties and crossing a number of hurdles. A large number of enthusiastic young men, yearning for the freedom of their country, soon flocked around him to get regular training. He remained busy as a

Guerilla Commander for some time, during which period scores of persons completed their training under his charge.

The activities of J. P. and his companion, both of whom were strangers to this free land, aroused the suspicion of the Nepal State police. Ultimately both of them were arrested. After his arrest, he was locked in a state jail. From there, he sent a word to his compatriots to rescue him at a time when he would be handed by the State authorities to the British police. He further instructed them that the "Azad Dasta" should organise an attack on the British police adding that he did not like the idea of harassing the authorities of the Nepal State.

Immediately an important meeting of the officers of the "Azad Dasta" was convened to consider the situation in the light of the advice of their leader. It was explained at that meeting that no one could tell the date and the actual position that might develop at the time of handing over of their leader to the British police. It was further argued that the strength of the British police or the military might be much superior to that of the "Azad Dasta" and it might, at that time, become impossible to organise an attack on them and secure the release of their leader.

After a good deal of discussion, it was eventually resolved to organise a surprise attack on the jail or the lock-up where Jai-

prakash Narain was confined. Their plans were immediately translated into action.

CHAPTER TEN

THE AUGUST REBELLION

The August Rebellion of 1942 will go down in history as the last milestone on India's road to independence. Premier Attlee's declaration that British will quit India by June, 1948, has successfully crowned the ideals of the Quit-India Movement. In that historic struggle, Mr. J. P. Narain played an illustrious role and consequently his name will ever shine across the firmaments of India.

A Picture of Rebellion

Interesting details of the outstanding incidents, including cases of sabotage, number of casualties by police firing, attacks on Government servants and damage to Government property during the August 1942 movement have been collected by Mr. Govindsahai, Parliamentary Secretary to the Home Minister, U. P. Government, which are being published in a booklet entitled "1942 Rebellion."

According to the author, who deals with the major incidents under different heads, the police opened fire on 116 occasions inflicting 207 fatal and 458 non-fatal casualties. The police suffered 16 fatal and

33 non-fatal casualties. The number of attacks on other Government servants were 144 of which three proved fatal.

Damage to Government Property

Regarding damage to Government property, Mr. Sahai estimates that 42 police stations or outposts were destroyed or severely damaged and 45 Government buildings were destroyed or severely damaged. The estimated loss to the Government was Rs. 3,63,366 and to other parties was Rs. 1,02,778.

There were 60 bomb explosions resulting in the death of 12 Government servants, seven cases of sabotage to electric supply companies and 84 cases of sabotage to roads were reported. Other cases of sabotage numbered 327.

Rs. 31 Lakhs of Collective Fines

The amount of collective fines imposed was Rs. 31,76,973, and the amount collected was Rs. 29,05,531. The number of passengers killed in railway accidents connected with the movement was six and the number of railway stations destroyed or severely damaged was 102. Thirty-one cases of serious damage to railway track were reported since October, 1942. The number of derailments or other accidents resulting from sabotage was 19. The estimated loss to railway property was Rs. 2,80,326.

One hundred and eight Posts and Telegraphs offices and sub-offices were destroyed or severely damaged. The number of cases of destruction or various damage to other property, telegraphs and telephones was 545. The estimated loss to the Posts and Telegraphs property was Rs. 80,925.

The number of cases in which military property or installations were destroyed or severely damaged was 11, the estimated loss being Rs. 1,420. The estimated loss to the Central Department's property was Rs. 60,267.

The Congress Responsibility for Disturbances

"From the beginning of the struggle," says the Government Report, "the Congress Socialist Party, a group within the main party and an integral part of the Congress, had played an important part with Bombay as its main centre. The escape from Hazaribagh Jail in early November of Jaiprakash Narain, the General Secretary of the Congress Socialist Party, the same man whose detected attempt to smuggle letters from Delhi in 1941 had caused such a sensation and who in those letters had poured scorn on the 'farce of satyagraha' and had called for the organisation of a secret wing which would not pay even lip-service to the creed of non-violence—further increased the influence of

this left-wing section of the Congress. With the arrest from time to time of certain of the other leaders, Jaiprakash Narain came to play an increasingly important part in the direction of a movement, which was not indistinguishable from an underground revolutionary movement with all the trappings of terrorism, political dacoity, unscrupulous opportunism and complete disregard of the safety and welfare of the general public."

It is true that the Congress Socialist Party took a prominent part in the Quit-India Movement, but then the Government has made serious uncalled-for allegations against its General Secretary. The letters supposed to have been smuggled have long been proved to have been fabricated by Shri Jaiprakash Narain; but it is not the habit of bureaucracy to take note of a fact which is not in their favour. He has never called the individual non-violent non-co-operation movement started by Mahatma Gandhi as the "farce of satyagraha." Mr. Narain did organise a secret wing. But to state that "would not pay even lip-service to the creed of non-violence" is to grossly mis-state the fact. With the arrest from time to time of certain of the other leaders, it is true Jaiprakash Narain came to play an increasingly important part in the direction of the "Quit-India" Movement. It was no doubt an underground revolution. But it

had no trappings of terrorism. There was no political dacoity. Sabotage was confined to the directives of Mahatma Gandhi. To state that Mr. Jaiprakash Narain could be accused of "unscrupulous opportunism" is not to understand Jaiprakash Narain. "Complete disregard of the safety and welfare of the general public" is the last thing to be expected from him. It is strange how the official journalists can over-reach themselves in order to please their bosses. Complete disregard of the British safety and welfare of the general bureaucratic public is the worse that should have been expected from Jaiprakash Narain.

Revolutionary Greetings

J. P. Nárain addressed the following message from "Somewhere in India" to all Fighters of Freedom:

"Let me first of all offer you and those comrades who have been made prisoners of war my heartiest congratulation on the magnificent battle already given to the enemy. Nothing like it ever happened or was expected to happen in this our long suffering and suppressed country. It truly was the 'Open Rebellion' envisaged by our incomparable leader Mahatma Gandhi.

"The rebellion, no doubt, seems to have been suppressed for the moment. But I hope you will agree with me that it has been suppressed only for the moment. This

should cause us no surprise. As a matter of fact, had the very first assault been successful and had it completely crushed imperialism, that in reality would have been a matter for surprise. The very fact that the enemy himself has admitted that the rebellion came pretty near destroying his power, shows how successful was the first phase of our National Revolution.

"And how was the first phase suppressed? Was it the military power of the enemy, his unmitigated reign of goondaism, looting, arson and murder that did the job? No. It is wrong to consider the "Revolt" as having been "suppressed". The history of all revolutions shows that a revolution is not an event. It is a phase, a social process. And during the evolution of a revolution, tides and ebbs are normal. Our revolution is at present going through the period of low water, so soon rather than rise to higher heights and go from victory to victory, not because the superior physical force of the imperialist aggressors intervened, but because of two important reasons.

"Firstly there was no efficient organisation (of the national revolutionary forces) that could function and give effective lead to the mighty forces that were released. The Congress, though a great organisation, was not tuned to the pitch to which the revolution was to rise. The lack of organisation was so considerable that even

important Congressmen were not aware of the progress of the revolt, and till late in course of the rising it remained a matter of debate in many Congress quarters whether what the people were doing was really in accordance with the Congress programme. In the same connection should be mentioned the regrettable fact that quite a considerable number of influential Congressmen failed to attune their mental attitude to spirit of this 'last fight for freedom'. The earnestness, the urgency, the determination that marked the attitude of leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Rajendra Prasad or Sardar Patel failed to reflect in the minds and hearts of all Congress leaders.

"Secondly, after the first phase of the rising was over there was no further programme placed before the people. After they had completely destroyed the British Raj in their areas, the people considered their task fulfilled, and went back to their homes not knowing what more to do. Nor was it their fault. The failure was ours: we should have supplied them with a programme for the next phase. When this was not done, the revolt came to standstill and the phase of the ebb began. This situation was created many days before the British soldiers arrived in sufficient numbers to push back yet further the receding works of the revolt. What programme should have been placed before the people in the second phase? The answer is

suggested by the nature of revolutions. A revolution is not only a destructive process, it is at the same time a great constructive force. No revolution could succeed if it only destroyed. If it should survive, it must create an authority to replace the one it has destroyed. Our revolution too having accomplished over large territories of the country the negative task of destruction called for a positive programme. The people who destroyed the objects and means of administration of the foreign power and drove away its agents should have set up in their areas their own units of revolutionary government and created their own police and militia. Had this been done, it would have released such an unprecedented volume of energy and opened up such a vast field for constructive work that the waves of the revolution would have mounted higher and higher till if the rising was countrywide—the imperialist power had been broken and the people had seized supreme authority throughout the land.

"The lack of efficient organisation and of a complete programme of National Revolution : these were two causes of the downward course of the first phase of the present revolution.

"The question is what are our present tasks? First, to banish all depression from our minds and those of the people, and create an atmosphere of joy instead at the success

achieved and of hope for success in the future.

"Second, we must keep steadfastly before our minds and of the people the nature of this revolution. It is our last fight for freedom. Our objective can, therefore, be nothing but victory. There can be no half-way houses. The efforts that men like Rajagopalachari are making for the establishment of national government are not only fruitless but positively harmful inasmuch as they distract public attention from the real issues. There is no compromise between the slogans of "Quit India" and of a "national government". Those who are running after the slogan of Congress-League unity are merely serving the ends of imperialist propaganda. It is not the lack of unity that is obstructing the formation of a national government, but the natural unwillingness of imperialism to liquidate itself. Mr. Churchill left no manner of doubt about it, when he declared recently that he had not assumed the office of the King's first minister to preside over the liquidation of the Empire. He would be a foolish student of society indeed who expected empires to wither away of their own accord. Those erstwhile "revolutionaries" who are attempting today to wash away the Indian Empire by the cataclysmic force of humble memorials are making of themselves the most pitiable fools of history.

"It is not the unity of all the important elements in the Indian life, to quote the imperialist jargon, that is the need of the hour but the unity of all the national revolutionary forces. And these are already united under the flag of the Congress. Unity between the League and the Congress does not foreshadow the growth of these forces, but their absolute relation, for the League cannot conceivably tread the path of revolution and freedom.

"The complete overthrow of imperialism, then, is our objective and we must keep this steadfastly in view. There can be no compromise on this issue. Either we win or we lose. And lose we shall not. Not only because we are determined ceaselessly to work for victory, but also because powerful world forces are drawing the doom of imperialism and fascism ever nearer and nearer. Do not believe that the formal results of this war settled laboriously at the peace conference would settle the fate of the post-war world. War is a strange alchemist, and in its hidden chambers are such forces and powers brewed and distilled that they tear down the plans of the victorious and vanquished alike. No peace conference at the end of the last war decided that four mighty empires of Europe and Asia should fall into dust—the Russian, the German, the Austrian and Ottoman. Nor, was the Russian, the German, the Turkish Revolution decreed by Lloyd

George, Clemenceau or Wilson.

"Throughout the world where men are fighting, dying and suffering today, the alchemist is at work, just as he is in India, where he has already let loose a mighty social upheaval. Neither Churchill nor Roosevelt, neither Hitler nor Tojo will determine the fate of the world at the end of this war. It is force such as we represent that will fulfil that historic task. Can we doubt that revolutionary forces are stirring everywhere? Can we believe that millions of people are undergoing unutterable suffering without a thought for the future? Can we believe that millions are satisfied with the lies that their rulers daily feed them with? No, it cannot be so.

"Having therefore definitely fixed our vision on the goal of total victory, we have to march ahead. What concretely must we do? What does a general do when he loses or wins a battle? He consolidates and prepares for the next battle? Rommel stopped at El Alamein after his great victory to consolidate and prepare. Alexander too prepared and he turned his serious defeat into a resounding victory. Ours was not even a defeat. We really won the first round of the fight inasmuch as in our large territories of the country the civil rule of the British aggressor was completely uprooted. The masses have now learnt from experience that the imposing edifice of the

police and magistracy and law courts and prisons which goes by the name of British Raj is but a house of cards when they hurl against either collective power. This lesson is not likely to be forgotten and it constitutes the starting point for the next offensive.

"Our third and most important task then at the present moment is to prepare for the next major offensive. Perhaps organisation, discipline ourselves—these are our present watch-words.

"The next offensive? When do we expect to launch the next offensive? Some people think that the masses will not rise again for the next five or six years. This estimate might be true of peace time but it does not hold good for a stormy war-torn world of fast moving events. The savage tyrannies of the British fascists—the Linlithgows, the Hallets, the Stewarts and the myriads of others and their's base Indian Lackys—may have compelled the people to lie low for the present, but they have nowhere converted them into friends of the oppressors. The whole country-side, where this British type of Nazi Hell was let loose, is seething with the most intense discontent, anger and thirst for revenge. The people have merely to understand that powerful preparations are afoot to take courage again and to enter the plans and schemes of the next offensive, with active co-ordinates and disciplined work; it would be wholly

favourable for the next assault. International events may come to our aid. Then there is Gandhiji's ever-impending fast unto death, a constant reminder to us and to the people not to slacken, not to waver, not to rest on the oars.

"The question of the next offensive is linked up with the question of the positive task of the revolution, *i.e.*, the establishment of the units of the revolutionary governments. With the latter question is bound up the question of violence and maintained armed forces. I wish, therefore, to place before you my view on this question, as to my mind it affects vitally the future of our revolution.

"First of all, I feel I must say a few words about the noise the British authorities have made about the violence committed in the course of this revolution. There was some violence indeed under extreme provocation, but it was remarkably little as compared with the magnitude of the rising and the staggering manifestation of individual and collective non-violence. It is not realised, perhaps, that thousands of British and Indian employees of the foreign power were for some days literally at the mercy of the masses, who took compassion on their foes and spared them their lives and property. And what of the cool, sublime courage of those thousands of young and old who received the enemy's bullets on their chests

with the flag revolution in their hands and 'Inqilab Zindabad' on their lips? Have the British a word of praise for this godly courage?

"In any case it is not remarkable that the British power which is soaked in violence, which is based on violence, which daily commits the most pitiless forms of violence, which grinds down millions of people and sucks their life-blood should make so much noise about the violence that others commit? How are the British concerned with what weapons we choose to fight them with? Have they pledged non-violence if the rebels adhere to? Have they not already shot down thousands of our non-violent soldiers? Whatever weapons we use the British have only bullets for us and looting and rape and arson. So let them keep quiet as to how we fight them, it is our business entirely to decide that.

"Coming to the question as it affects us, I would first remind you of the difference between Gandhiji's views on non-violence and those of the Working Committee and the A.-I.C.C. Gandhiji is in no event prepared to depart from non-violence. With him it is a question of faith and life-principle. Not so with the Congress. Then Congress has stated repeatedly during this war that if India became free, or even if a national government were set up, it would be prepared to resist aggression with arms. But,

if we are prepared to fight Japan and Germany with arms, why must we refuse to fight Britain in the same manner? The only possible answer can be that the Congress in power could have an army, whereas the Congress in wilderness has none. But supposing a revolutionary army were created or if the present Indian army or a part of it rebel, would it not be inconsistent for us first to ask the army to rebel and then ask the rebels to lay down arms and face British bullets with bare chest?

" My own interpretation of the Congress position—not Gandhiji's—is clear and definite. Congress is prepared to fight aggression violently if the country became independent. Well, we have declared ourselves independent, and also named Britain as an aggressive power; we are, therefore, justified within the terms of the Bombay resolution itself to fight Britain with arms. If this does not accord with Gandhiji's principles, that is not my fault. The Working Committee and the A.-I.C.C. themselves have chosen to differ from Gandhiji and to reject his conception of non-violence as applied to the war. Nor was Gandhiji allowed by the British power to lead and shape this resolution; so, in following interpretation we should in no manner be false to him. We should only be discharging our duties in the light of our own reason. As far as I am concerned, I feel that I should be com-

pletely justified as an honest Congressman, without in any manner intruding my socialism upon the question, in repelling the British aggression with arms.

" I should add that I have no hesitation in admitting that non-violence of the brave, if practised on a sufficiently large scale, would make violence unnecessary, but where such non-violence is absent, I should not allow cowardice, clothed in Shastric subtleties, to block the development of this revolution and lead to its failure.

" With the implication of the last phase of the revolution clear in our minds, we have to prepare, organise, train and discipline our forces. In everything we do, we have constantly to bear in mind that ours is not to be merely a conspiratorial action. It is total revolt of the masses that is our objective. So, along with our immense technical work, we must do intensive work among the masses—peasants in the villages and the workers in the factories, mines, railways and elsewhere. We must do ceaseless propaganda among them and help them in their present difficulties, organise them to fight for their present demands, recruit from them selected soldiers for our various activities and train them technically and politically. With training a few may succeed where thousands failed before. In every fiska and taluka and thana, in every considerable factory and

workshop or other industrial centres, we must have a band of militants, mentally and materially equipped for the next rising.

"Then there is our work in the Indian Army and the services. There is agitational and demonstrative work. There is work in the schools and colleges and in the market not possible for me here to describe our preparations more concretely. Let it suffice to say that there is tremendous work to be done and work for every one. Much is being done at present, but vastly more remains to be done.

"Who but youth can accomplish all this? Is it too much to hope that our students who have set such a brilliant record already will follow up their achievements and vindicate the promise they have given? It is for the students themselves to answer.

"I should make it clear that preparation does not mean that fighting entirely ceases for the moment. No 'skirmishes', 'frontier activities', 'minor clashes', 'sniping', 'patrolling'—all this must go on. There are in themselves a preparation of the offensive.

"With full confidence in the people and devotion to the cause, let us, then, march ahead. Let our steps be firm, our hearts resolute and our vision undimmed. The sun of the Indian freedom has already risen above the horizon. Let not the clouds of our own doubts and disputes, inaction and

faithlessness, obscure that sun and drown us in our self-created darkness.

"In the end, comrades, I should like to say that it has made me inexpressibly happy and proud to be able once again to place my services at your disposal. In serving you, the last words of our leader, 'do or die' shall be my guiding star, your co-operation my strength and your command my pleasure."

Behind the Prison Bars

All topmost heroes of India were sent behind the prison bars. Mahatma Gandhi languished in Agha Khan's palace. There too were languished to death Kasturba and Mahadev Desai. Pandit Nehru was busy with his *Discovery of India* in the Ahmednagar Fort where too were other members of the Congress Working Committee. All jails of India were packed with heroes and heroines. Many of them were rotting there for three years (1942—45). Mr. Ashoka Mehta writes :

"Three years are a long period—and when one is confined in a small yard for that time, it evokes an intensity of experience. Its memories come up, not as a flowing stream, but as a picture gallery, and sometimes as an integrated vision like a painting reproduced by the superimposition of different coloured printings.

"Prison, it has been said, is a school

of patience. In rare cases it is much more —it hastens maturity of mind and spirit, in a memorable speech that Aurobindo Ghose delivered immediately after his release from jail there occurs a remarkable passage—over and over again he heard a voice telling him, 'The bonds you had not the strength to break, I have broken for you . . . . I have brought you here to teach you what you could not learn for yourself.' This realisation is the highest achievement that a prison offers to a true and chosen spirit—it becomes not a hated place of detention but an abode of *sadhana*. This is the yardstick by which one should measure one's prison experience.

"As the release came, unlike other times, veteran Congress workers, whose names make headlines were set free. The new-comers, the unknown young men, were kept back and are still being detained. Yet their morale remains sound. Even when their efforts and ideals were traduced were reviled by the released veterans, their morale was unimpaired. In the stirring words of Jawaharlal and the Sardar they see their faith vindicated.

"The young men of 1942 have shown a rare spirit of fellowship. In their smiles there is a cementing force! They have come together not merely in politics but in life. Full of clean fun and frolic, they have in them a core of steel—a firm, unswerving yet unobstrusive determination to 'do or die.'

That is the great heritage of 1942 that the Congress organisation has now to integrate in its fabric if it seeks to realise its destiny.

"In 1933, I had seen young men, in prison, anxious to explore the world, to understand India in terms of the world. They hated to be provincial, narrow in outlook. In 1943 I saw young men anxious to explore space and time, their vision was four dimensional; they yearned for a sense of history; they scorned to be provincial not only in space but in time, they sought to understand the world in terms of the evolving India, and, strangely, more their minds flew untrammelled, more they flocked together and moved towards a common goal.

"For some weeks, as a jail punishment, I was completely isolated, virtually deprived of human company. It was an interesting and not unwelcome experience. Daily life, from an unconscious routine, became a deliberate ritual. Toller's *Letters from Prison*, Rosa Luxemburg's *Prison Letters* and Arthur Koestler's *Dialogue with Death* when re-read in that solitude opened new petals of meaning. The chirping of birds and the stirring of leaves got vested with meaning and value. The links with Nature are fully and truly opened only when the ties with men and affairs are slackened.

"Prison is a rare school. It teaches firmness and catholicity. Twenty-four hours

of close companionship with men unknown before, teaches one valuable lessons in accommodation. It raises group living to a fine art in the hands of a truly creative and humanist spirit. Solitary confinement provides a balancing development—in terms of solitude and detachment.

" The most unforgettable experience of the 153 weeks spent by me in this my fourth trek to prison has been the contact with the young men. Their affection, their integrity and humanity had a rejuvenating quality. One sees in them the harbingers of a New India—India freed from shackles. The ghost of the dead past no longer holds them back and yet they are no blind enemies of our ancient heritage. Venerating tradition, they are enemies of traditionalists; valuing equality they anathemise the "communists", passionate lovers of India they refuse to be parochial in Time or Space. Under wise, tolerant and courageous leadership these young men can become the architects of a great, perhaps undying, future. It is these young men *that* I salute."

To American Officers and Soldiers in India

J. P. Narain addressed a " secret circular " as follows :

" I address you as one who loves America only next to his own motherland.

I spent the best part of my youth in your great country and seven of my happiest years. I went there as a student and learnt much not only from its universities but also from its factories and farms where I worked as an ordinary labourer in order to pay my way through college. Having studied at California, Iowa and Wisconsin, I finally graduated from Ohio. There may be men among you from these universities. To such of you I send my fraternal greetings.

"I address you further as one who loves freedom and is prepared as, you are, to lay down his life for it. And also as a socialist who believes that under socialism alone can war be banished from society and our freedom secured which your president had defined as major objectives of the peace that is to follow this war.

"I address you also as a prisoner of war who has just exercised his right to escape from the enemy. I recently escaped from the Hazaribagh Central Prison, so that I may serve the cause of freedom more actively. The enemy—I mean the British Imperialist Government—has set up a reward for my arrest, as if I were a criminal run away from justice. Surely, every one of you, if a prisoner of war and given the chance, would run away from your enemy's camp; and your comrades and your countrymen would rightly look upon you as a hero. I am no hero, and yet I am not a criminal.

I wish merely to work for the freedom of my people.

" Too many men in the world are fighting and dying today for freedom. But I am afraid this word freedom has became too abstract—and devoid of substance, too undefined and vague. For me freedom is not an airy ideal to be talked about in radio broadcasts, but a concrete object. First of all and most of all, it means the freedom of my country—the freedom of our hundred millions of people from British Rule.

" You are soldiers of freedom and you have been brought into close touch of my country. It is, therefore, essential that you understand and appreciate our fight for freedom.

" You are all acquainted with Nazi lies. Dr. Gœbbels has become synonymous with lying. But, perhaps, you are not acquainted with a far subtler and refined tradition of lying—imperialist lying, of which Churchill, Halifax, Amery and company are the brilliant present exponents. If you have bothered at all about India, you must have been told two tremendous lies. The first that Britain holds India down only to educate and train her in the arts of self-government, and will continue to do so only until such time as she is able properly to look after herself. The second that Britain is prepared to free India immediately if Indians united among themselves.

"No greater lies were ever uttered in history. But these are not lies like those of Gœbbels, nor do they come from the mouth of insolent Nazi rulers. Therefore, they do not grate upon your ears. They have the prestige of ages and tradition, they have the gloss of British culture, they are mouthed by noble lords and aristocrats of wealth. Poetry and literature, learning and science have sanctified them until we witness today the strange spectacle of even the most emancipated British minds failing to transcend their limits.

"It is an insult to the intelligence of any but a moron to say that imperialisms are founded to train 'backward' peoples in the arts of self-government; Empires, as you know, are founded to loot and to rob and to exploit. And the amount of British loot and exploitation in India would stagger even you who are accustomed to the astronomical figures of your national budgets.

"Before Britain enslaved her, India was a free country. She did not have to learn the art of self-government from anybody. If at that moment the country was torn with wars, that was no more evidence of the unfitness of the people to govern themselves, than the much too frequent and far more bloody wars of Europe prove that the continent with its islands, is ready to be taught a lesson in self-government by, let us say,

the United States of America. First to destroy the freedom of a nation and then to claim to train the enslaved in the art of freedom, is such a process of historic perversion that only the master of empire-building can venture to father it.

" And how have the British been training us in the art of self-government ? They have been here now for 150 years. In less than that period your great country, after it freed itself from a similar tutorship of the same power, has been able to transform itself from a disunited collection of backward colonies into the mightiest and the most advanced nation of the world. While you can see for yourself what the British tutors have done to us in a longer period of time. Not more than 10 per cent of the population is literate, not more than ten per cent of the economic resources of the country has been developed. Even during the three years of this total war you can see for yourselves what progress the country has made under British tutelage in production for war. This has been so scandalous that the Government of India did not even dare to publish the report of the American Technical Mission, which investigated under Dr. Grady, certain matters of industrial production. So anxious indeed have the British rulers been for our progress, that every little progress—political, economical, educational—has been made in the teeth of their opposition and after great

agitation and often bitter struggle. The bitterest struggle of all, and the last, is on to win our total emancipation from the British stranglehold."

India Will Lead Asia

The American edition of the book *Subject India* by the veteran British left-wing liberal Henry Noel Brailsford, caused surprise to many American readers by its boldness and bitter criticism of the British policy. It calls for India's complete independence either within or without the Empire and urges the United States to play its part in the Indian settlement.

The author, however, is likewise aware of the shortcomings of the Indians with which he deals frankly. He makes ten tentative suggestions for solving the problem to be carried out in the following order : "Firstly, in the Pacific Charter a joint offer of independence should be made to India by all United Nations interested. Secondly, Indian business should be transferred from India Office to the Dominion Office. Thirdly, the new Viceroy should open his reign with political amnesty and state that he hoped to be able to transform his Council into a National Government. Fourthly, Congress simultaneously should call off the revolt. Fifthly, the Viceroy should advise the Princes to prepare for entry into the Indian Union

by conceding full civil political rights to their subjects. Sixthly, Coalition Ministries should resume self-government in six Conress provinces. Seventhly, possibly with the help of a mediator, the Congress and the Muslim League should negotiate an agreement over Pakistan conceding the right of the provinces to separate self-determination under arbitral tribunal acceptable to both. Eighthly, the Viceroy should then call the best available man, who should probably be a Muslim, to form, from the Congress and the League and other leading groups, a National Government, whose chief task would be to conduct war effort and prepare a draft constitution for the Indian Union. Ninthly, as soon as active hostilities ended in the Indian zone, new elections should be held in the provinces and states. The process of self-determination then follows the lines of Cripps offer and Pakistan agreement. Tenthly, relations of the single Indian Union (or Hindustan and Pakistan) with the British Commonwealth then, after negotiation, should be fixed by a treaty. At once or after an agreed interval, the decision should be taken by the Indian Dominion (or Dominions) whether it (or they) will remain within or secede from the British Commonwealth."

The question, "Will anything really be won for humanity when India does gain independence?" is left unanswered specifi-

cally by Mr. Brailsford, who, however, concludes hopefully: "Looking around them, when the last British Viceroy quits his palace the Indians will see opportunities where there were closed doors and difficulties to be overcome, where once impossibilities confronted them, a country to be recreated and shaped by their own effort and thought. It may be that they exaggerated their command over the future. By faith men grow to greatness."

"Not Japan nor China, but India will be the leader of future East Asia." This opinion was expressed by Mr. Karl von Weigand, the chief correspondent for the "East of Hearst Newspapers"—a 69-year old veteran journalist and an expert on the East—in an interview to the *Associated Press of India.*

Weigand amplified his statement as follows: "The Japanese mentality is shallow, though quick. The Chinese mentality is profound but slow, whereas the Indian mentality is both profound and quick. And while the Chinese are inclined to be materialistic, the spiritualistic characteristic in the Indian is an asset."

Weigand referred to India's contribution to the world's culture and progressive thought, and paid a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi. "I know the old man personally. He is the tallest and greatest of the men of the present-day world," he said.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

HOW BRITAIN STABBED QUIT-INDIA MOVEMENT

The Great Britain could not have stabbed the great rebellion without the co-operation of the Muslim League. The responsibility for the failure of the Quit-India Movement rests upon the shoulders of Mr. M. A. Jinnah. This chapter gives a vivid idea of Jaiprakash's feelings because it comprises some significant extracts from his speeches and messages while he was still dogged by the police.

Jaiprakash Speaks (1943)

"In August last not only did the war situation contribute to the creation of a suitable psychological atmosphere but also the fact that the Congress stood in all its power at the head of the people. The people had faith in their leaders and when the call went forth they responded with confidence and enthusiasm. Today these leaders are in prison and they must present an appearance of helplessness to the people. Thus the second element in the creation of a mass psychology of the rebellion is also absent today.

"But while it is not in our power to

provide the first element, we can and should remedy the situation in respect of the second. A tendency is growing amongst fighters to take shelter from activity behind the idle complaint that the masses do not move, do not respond. This is defeatism. The masses cannot move till there is force in us to move them. They cannot respond, they cannot follow us till we are able by our activities, and the strength and efficiency of our organisation to win their confidence. The masses did their duty once. It was we who were found wanting. They shall do their duty again provided we do ours. In August last the masses had before their eyes the concrete power of the Congress and the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Today if they are made to feel that they are left alone, that there is no organised force in the country, which remains undefeated and continues the struggle, they would naturally sink down into despair and resign themselves to their kismet.

"The present, therefore, is a stage primarily for the enlisted soldiers of revolution, the irreconcilable fighters of freedom to act it. They must strengthen their organisation and carry ceaseless war unto the enemy. No suffering, no sacrifice should be counted too great; no controversy, no temptation, no false hope should deflect our course. All avenues of struggle are open to us

Whatever be our faiths and creeds, whatever our methods and weapons, our course is clear. We must keep on fighting. Whether we fight a year or ten years should make no difference to us. The Americans fought their War of Independence for seven years, the Chinese have just entered the seventh year of their war of liberation. We must but completed our first year of fighting. During the American and Chinese wars there were moments when all seemed to be lost, but the leaders and men held on, and victory was eventually with the Americans, as it will be with the Chinese. The present is far from being the darkest moment of our struggle, and yet weaklings and cowards have dared raise their voice. These are traitors to their country and we must chuck them out of our way, and march on. Worse times may be in store for us, but let hardship and suffering not deter us but harden us. Then shall we be worthy of the people's confidence, then they shall respond to our call.

" Another controversy that has been started since the publication of the Gandhi-Viceroy correspondence is whether the present struggle was started by the Congress and whether it can be called a Congress movement. It has been claimed by some, who have gone so far as to suggest that a rump A.-I.C.C. should meet to withdraw the Bombay Resolution, that since Gandhiji and other Congress leaders were arrested before

they could make a formal declaration of war, this struggle is not a Congress struggle at all. According to the logic of this argument no struggle, if the British were to arrest the leaders in time, could ever have the formal authority and sanction of the Congress. What is that those who deny the authority of the Congress to the struggle would desire to have happened on the 9th of August after the cowardly attack on our leaders? What do they think was the desire of Mahatma Gandhi and the Working Committee in the event of their arrest? Would the detractors of the present struggle have been happy if there had been no reaction to the arrest of the leaders, if the country had calmly bowed its head before the imperialist jack-boot? Or was it expected that only protest meetings should have been held demanding the release of arrested leaders (as was advocated by certain erstwhile revolutionaries), and when they were not released, further meetings should have been held, till the audience became too disgusted to attend, after which the "protestants" could have gone to sleep with a clear conscience? If this be so, where was the sense of that brave revolution and those brave words that were poured forth from the lips of the greatest in the land at the Bombay A.-I.C.C.? If on the other hand this be not so, and if the people were expected to rise in answer to the British

offensive, if, indeed, the arrest of the leaders was a signal for a mass struggle, then where is the grace and fairness in decrying the present struggle as un-Congress and unauthorised ? When you are on the war path, it is foolish to expect the enemy to allow you the leisure to complete all the formalities required by a peace-time constitution. It therefore appears to me to be mean and cowardly to attempt to show that the national struggle that started on that 9th of August, 1942, has not the authority and sanction of the Congress."

Congress-League Co-operation

" Closely connected with the above discussion is the question of a national government and Congress-League agreement. A national government by all means. But the most amusing thing is that while Congress fights for such a government and suffers others merely talk. If a national government is not the same thing as coalition ministries under the Act of 1935 or a glorified Viceroy's Council, it cannot be won by holding conferences. The Congress left that futile path years ago and if communists expect to establish such a government by petitioning to their imperial masters, they are welcome to their toading. But they will achieve nothing but the ridicule of the people and the contempt of their pay-masters.

"The agitation for a Congress-League

agreement as a pre-condition of a national government is not new and there was no reason for me to touch upon it here. But the depression that has caught some Congressmen who have been seeking a way back to constitutionalism has led them anew into this barren agitation. Becoming weary of direct action, they are eager to fall back on this easy nostrum, forgetting that the author of the agitation, Mr. Rajagopalachari, is still cooling his heels before the gates of Mr. Jinnah's mansion, and that Mahatma Gandhi's letter to the League leader still remains undelivered. (Though we have had the rare fortune of reading the reply to an undelivered and unread letter.) I have for this reason considered it desirable to touch upon this subject briefly."

J. P. Admires British Diplomacy

"One is compelled to pay a tribute to the skill of British propaganda when one observes how intelligent men fall a prey to it. Either that, or one must acknowledge the depth of national degeneracy which we have reached. If British propaganda 'takes in' the innocent Americans (though even among them there are quite a few who see through it), one can understand, but when it bamboozles an Indian, you have to regard it as one of the world's wonders. Recent events in India have torn Britain's every pretence to shreds. Not even a fig leaf hides

now the true shape and purpose of British imperialism. Yet, there are Indians who believe and want their countrymen to believe that nothing but the absence of a Congress-League settlement stands in the way of India achieving her independence.

"If the course of British policy in the past few months has established anything it is the grim determination to hold on at any cost to their Indian Empire. If any point emerged with undimmed clarity from the Cripps negotiations it was the firm resolve of Britain not to hand over real power to India during the war, no matter what measure of unity was achieved in the country. Cripps stated categorically that even if the Congress and Muslim League jointly demanded a real national government, responsible to the people, it could not be granted during the war. (And who was or is interested in British promises for the future ?) In view of this clear statement of British policy, to agitate for a Congress-League agreement serves no other purpose but to lend strength and respectability to the lies which the Churchills and Amerys tirelessly peddle around the world. The agitation for Congress-League understanding becomes in these circumstances a part of the imperialist offensive against nationalist India.

"It might be asked : even if Congress-League settlement does not by itself compel

Britain to grant India national government, would it not at least strengthen the forces of freedom and, as such, is it not desirable in itself and worth working for? The conclusion would be true were so the premise. But the premise is entirely untrue. In our country the only forces of freedom are those that are ready to fight and suffer for freedom. The Muslim League during its entire career has not once taken the path of struggle and suffering, nor is it ready to take the path today. India cannot win her freedom without fighting for it. And when the Muslim League is not prepared to participate in the fight, a settlement with it in no way strengthens the forces of freedom. Pandit Nehru was not using empty word when he stated that it would have been easy any day to settle with the League were it prepared to join the struggle for freedom."

The League Is in League with Britain

"So much for the Congress-League unity. A word about the real politics of the League. It is necessary to grasp clearly that the League is in league with Britain. Mr Jinnah is a deliberate traitor to his country, a Mir Jaffer of the present day. He believes that he can get what he wants from Britain. But Britain is not accustomed to handing over parcels of her Empire to its tools. There is no doubt that after she has made

the full use of Mr. Jinnah she will throw him into the dus-bin of discarded tools as surely as she has thrown others into it before Mir Jaffer included. Let Muslims remember that it is not the sons of Mir Jaffer who rule Bengal today but the dirty kin of Clive. Mr. Jinnah no doubt considers himself a very clever person, but for all his conceit and Fuehrerian attitudes history will show him to have been made an historic fool.

"Mr. Jinnah wants his Pakistan. But if he is serious about it, he must fight for it, he must make sacrifices for it, possibly die for it. But, there is the rub : it is exactly these things which Mr. Jinnah and his followers are never prepared to do. Therefore, Mr. Jinnah shrieks his demand for Pakistan in the face of Mahatma Gandhi. But poor Gandhi is not in possession of Jinnah's sacred homelands. It is the blood-soaked heels of imperialism that possess and trample upon them that defile and desecrate them. The Congress can have no objection if Mr. Jinnah takes his "homelands" from the British at least a part of India would then be free. But he will not take them, for he is not prepared to pay the price. He therefore wants to get along by blackmailing the Congress. But, in the end it will be Churchill who will have blackmailed Jinnah. If India is ever partitioned under the auspices of the Mother of Parliaments it would be in the interest of imperialism not

to bestow a separate freedom upon the so-called Muslim nation of Hindustan. Ulster does no good to the Irish, but it is a British knife thrust into the very heart of Eire.

"The League's real politik is the ugly issue of imperialist machination and national treachery."

CHAPTER TWELVE

J. P. AND NETAJI

Jaiprakash and Netaji will always be remembered as the two most glorious figures of India's struggle for freedom during the Second World War. They staked everything and they defied everybody. Subhas Bose always have had a great respect for Jaiprakash even though the latter let down the former in the battle of Tripuri, but that was only a repetition of Gandhiji's policy of divide-and-rule the leftists, because previously Jawaharlal had also let down Bose for Gandhi at the Lahore session.

J. P., as the Congress socialists always love to call Jaiprakash Narain, has for many years come to possess a glamour second only to that of Netaji. Both made a firm unshakable resolve to turn the war situation into an opportunity to strike for India's liberation. Both persisted heroically in their endeavour when to others all seemed futile. Both remained loyal to the Congress objective of independence rather than to the programme sanctioned by it for the realisation of that objective. Netaji escaped out of India and sought foreign allies for his endeavour. J. P.'s tale of glamorous adventure begins with his escape from prison and

his starting secret activity in collaboration with those already "underground" since August, 1942, though it is possible his story also has a chapter running beyond British India—to the Nepal border. Many await an authentic narrative of the jail-breaking and of J. P.'s subsequent adventures till his betrayal into the hands of the Punjab Police with about the same keenness with which they recently read the stories narrated by Netaji's stay in Kabul as Zia-ud-Din seeking an opportunity to escape to Russia or to the Axis countries. A few perhaps await this authentic narration with more than mere curiosity—those suspected or accused by their comrades of complicity in the betrayal—for in the socialist circles, since J. P.'s re-arrest the worst accusation against a comrade has been that there were grounds for suspecting he had a hand in the great betrayal and of course nobody would have truck with Judas.

Like Netaji J. P. at first sight is a man who talks little but ponders deeply. Both give one the impression of extraordinary earnestness arising out of grim determination. J. P.'s power lies not in seductive or persuasive talk, it works rather like a silent magic which penetrates much deeper than talk. A talk with the C.S.P. friends and followers of J. P. often leaves one with the impression that in spite of all their seeming preoccupation with ideologies

and theoretical discussion of doctrine and tactics the decisive influence on them has rather been the J. P. radiation. In a display of ideological and dialectical fireworks the Indian communist often scores against them but I do not think the communist leadership in India has yet thrown up a personality as radiant and magnetic as J. P.'s or with his penetrative influence.

J. P. is cast in the heroic mould. But he has also done a good deal of political thinking. In the C.S.P. thesis and programmes his contribution has ever been outstanding, though these decuments have not always been crystal clear—have definitely suffered from compromises and confused thought—there can be no doubt. J. P.'s talents for political leadership are of a high order. In one of his acutest despatches analysing the failure of Wavell's Simla Conference, Preston Grover of the *A.P.A.* deplored the shortcomings of Indian leadership which was not able to get out of the stereotyped grooves, he also mentioned that many hoped for something better from certain younger leaders and he mentioned Jaiprakash. That must have come as a surprise to many—a delightful one for many of my Brother Freebooters. Yes. J. P. is rich in promise for tomorrow's India.

Subhas Supports Socialism

This fact has impressed itself upon the

minds of several prominent independent thinkers both in the Congress and outside. Speaking so far back as in 1931, at Karachi, Subhas Bose declared in unmistakable terms that a socialist republic based on Indian conditions alone could provide a real solution of the problems of the country. Organisation of peasants, labourers, and students was emphasised. Need and urgency of the transfer of power into the hands of labourers and peasants, and proper distribution of national wealth among all was stressed. Adoption of a bold uncompromising policy in the struggle against imperialism, regardless of all dangers, difficulties and obstacles was advocated.

1930 was one of the most stormy years in the history of the Indian political movement. There was civil disobedience in the country and the Congress was declared unlawful and it could not function constitutionally during the period. In March, 1931, however, the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed and the Congress resumed normal activities.

From the very start of negotiations young blood in the country made it clear to Mahatma Gandhi specially and other leaders generally that any compromise without the unconditional release of Sardar Bhagat Singh, the well-known convict of the Punjab Conspiracy Case and the Assembly Bomb Case, would not be acceptable to the people of India. Mahatmaji gave the strongest

possible assurance to the young leaders of Naujwan Bharat Sabha that he would earnestly try for that but despite his efforts he could not effect the release of Sardar Bhagat Singh. Gandhiji knew that the Viceroy had the right to directly commute the sentences but he hesitated to break the socio-economic structure, and body politics, which will help to foster manhood and develop character and the will to translate into reason the highest ideal of collective humanity. They were also interested in investigating the methods that will bring about the earliest attainment of this goal.

Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose said that he was led to the conclusion that the principles, which should form basis of their collective life, were " equality, freedom, discipline and love." Therefore in order to ensure equality we must get rid of bondage af every kind, social, economic and political, and must become fully and wholly free.

" To summarise, what I have said, I want a socialist republic in India. The message I have to give is of complete freedom and until these radical or revolutionary elements are stirred up, we cannot get freedom, and we cannot stir up revolutionary elements among us, except by inspiring them with a new image which comes from the heart and goes straight to the heart.

"The fundamental weakness in Congress policy and programme is this, there is a

great deal of vagueness, and mental reservation in the minds of the leaders. Their programme is based, not on radicalism, but on adjustments—adjustments between the landlord and the tenant, between the capitalist and the wage-earner, between the so-called upper classes and the so-called depressed classes, between men and women."

Subhas Boes did not believe, that the present programme could win freedom for India. The programme by which, he believed, freedom could be achieved was (*i*) organisation of peasants and workers, (*ii*) a socialist programme, organisation of youth into a volunteer corps under strict discipline, (*iii*) abolition of the caste-system, and the eradication of social and religious superstition of all kinds, (*iv*) organisation of women's associations for getting our womenfolk to accept the new gospel and work out the new programme, (*v*) intensive programme for the boycott of British goods, (*vi*) countrywide propaganda for explaining the new cult and for organising a new party, (*vii*) creation of new literature for propagating the new cult and programme

Before referring to the Gandhi-Irwin Truce, Mr. Bose alluded to the Lahore executions and said, "Bhagat Singh was a symbol of the spirit of revolt which had taken possession of the country from one end to the other. That spirit was uncon-

querable and the flame, which the spirit had lit up, would not die. The recent executions are to me therefore a sure indication that there has been no change of heart on the side of the Government, and the time for an honourable settlement had not yet arrived.

Bose versus Seetaramayya

In the presidential election tussle between Subhas Chandra Bose, India's Netaji today, and Pattabhi Seetaramayya, the C.S.P. threw up its weight on the side of the brave son of India who was to immortalise himself, only six years afterwards, as the Netaji of the Indian National Army. Pattabhi Seetaramayya's defeat was also considerably due to the opposition of the Congress Socialist Party.

Socialists " Stabb " Suhas

The party's role and attitude at the time of the Tripuri session however has drawn criticism both from the party members and the people outside it. The party remained neutral when the time came for voting on Pt. Govind Vallabh Pant's resolution calling upon Mr. Subhas Bose, the President of the Congress, to appoint a Working Committee which had the fullest confidence of Mahatma Gandhi. Due to this attitude of neutrality adopted by the party the Gandhites had an easy victory and resolution was carried with overwhelming

majority. This act was termed as a stab in the back by the supporters of the Congress President. Much can be said on both sides. It would however be unfair to give the accused no chance for clearing his position. Mr. Jaiprakash Narain's statement in this connection clears up the position. He said:

"Our party voted for Subhas Chandra Bose but from the very beginning we had made it clear that our vote did not mean a settling of the issues between the rightists and the leftists. We voted for Mr. S. C. Bose because we preferred him to the other candidate namely Mr. Pattabhi Seetaramayya, we then never expected that it would lead to a schism in the Congress. Our party does not and will not participate in the quarrel. It would not help us maintain unity. This could have been averted and a settlement arrived upon. We tried our best to prevent it. We went to Subhas Babu and asked him to issue a statement. He did so but it was not satisfactory. We came to the rightists but were disappointed. We came to the conclusion that unless the Working Committee was appointed in accordance with the wishes of Mahatma Gandhi it would not be possible to mnaintain unity. There are things said in the resolution with which we cannot agree. If only both sides had co-operated with us, it would have been possible to bring about a settlement. We do not

want to participate in this quarrel hence we have decided to remain neutral."

If the unity could not have been endangered by the defeat of the Mahatma in the presidential election it certainly could have been so by voting against Pt. Pant's resolution. The resolution in fact is representative of nothing but a tendency to stick to a dictator.

Acharya Narendra Deo's explanation that the left was weak and could not have defeated the resolution and hence the attitude of neutrality, is a bit more reasonable. Nevertheless it can be safely asserted that the Congress Socialist Party did not commit a very grave blunder in assuming the role of neutrality on the above.

The Year of Tripuri (1939)

The following extracts from the presidential address of Subhas Bose give a glimpse of the rotten state of affairs in India on the eve of the Second World War:

"Friends, this year promises to be an abnormal or extraordinary one in many ways. The presidential election this time was not of the humdrum type. The election was followed by sensational developments culminating in the resignation of twelve out of fitten members of the Working Committee, headed by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Maulana A. K. Azad and Dr. Rajendra Prasad. Another distinguished and eminent member

of the Working Committee, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, though he did not formally resign, issued a statement which led everybody to believe that he had also resigned. On the eve of the Tripuri Congress, events at Rajkot forced Mahatma Gandhi to undertake a vow of fast unto death. And then the president arrived at Tripuri a sick man. It will, therefore, be in the fitness of things if the presidential address this year can claim to be a departure from precedent in the matter of its length.

"Friends, you are aware that the Wafdist Delegation from Egypt have arrived in our midst as guests of the Indian National Congress. You will join me in according a most hearty welcome to all of them. We are extremely happy that they found it possible to accept our invitation and make the voyage to India. We are only sorry that political exigencies in Egypt did not permit the President of the Wafd, Mustapha El Nahas Pasha, to personally lead this Delegation. Having had the privilege of knowing the president and leading members of the Wafdist Party my joy today is all the greater. Once again, I offer them on behalf of our countrymen a most hearty and cordial welcome.

"It grieves me to find that there are people in Congress who are so pessimistic as to think that the time is not ripe for a major assault on British imperialism. But looking

at the situation in a thoroughly realistic manner, I do not see the slightest ground for pessimism. With Congress in power in eight provinces, the strength and prestige of our national organisation have gone up. The mass movement has made considerable headway throughout British India. And last but not the least, there is an unprecedented awakening in the Indian states. What more opportune moment could we find in our national history for a final advance in the direction of Swaraj particularly when the international situation is favourable to us? Speaking as a cold-blooded realist, I may say that all the facts of the present-day situation are so much to our advantage that one should entertain the highest degree of optimism. If only we sink our differences, pool all our resources and pull our full weight in the national struggle, we can make our attack on British imperialism irresistible. Shall we have the political foresight to make the most of our present favourable position or shall we miss this opportunity, which is rare opportunity in the lifetime of a nation?"

J. P. Supports I.N.A. (1943)

But there is no difference in the ideology of J. P. and Subhas Bose. As early as 1943, J. P. advocated the cause of I.N.A. from his secret grotto:

"You probably know that Shri Subhas

Chandra Bose has formed a Free Provisional Indian National Government at Shonan (Singapore) which has been recognised by the Japanese Government. He has also organised an Indian National Army which is said to be growing rapidly. These events have some significance for us. Parenthetically I may add for your information that one of the first act of the Subhas Government has been to offer to send us as much rice as may be required to feed the starving people of Bengal, but the British Government prefers to let the native vermin die.

"It is easy to denounce Subhas as a quisling. Those who are themselves quislings of Britain find it easiest to denounce him. But nationalist India knows him as a fervent patriot and as one who has always been in the forefront of his country's fight for freedom. It is inconceivable that he should ever be ready to sell his country. No doubt it is true that all the necessary resources of money and equipment that he has, have been supplied to him by the Axis Powers. But in the first place the men he has in his Government and the National Army are Indians who hate British rule and burn with a desire to free their motherland. In the second place, it is well to remember that the resources of all the fugitive governments of Europe which bask in the patronage of the United Nations come from those nations. Thirdly, no one can tell what concessions

the requirements of global strategy may force a great power to make to a weak and prostrate nation. The conferment of 'independence' upon Burma by the Japanese has received some advertisement and a report says that the Soviet Government has been so much impressed as to congratulate the Tojo Government upon their act of generosity. Be that as it may, there seems to be no doubt that the Burmese today enjoy much more freedom under the overlordship of a fascist state than they did under British 'democracy'. Turning to Shri Subhas Bose, it is clear that he has permitted himself to accept aid from enemies in accordance with an age-old political maxim —older than Machiavelli and older than Kautilya. In thus accepting help from a third party he may be deceived in the end, but there can be no question as to the honesty of his purpose and the scale of his resourcefulness. His success or failure in assisting his country to achieve her freedom will depend on the course of events over which neither he nor any other political leader of any country has much control.

"Recognising the importance of the Shonan Indian Government and the National Army, I must emphasise that our freedom largely depends upon our own strength and resources. Hopeless inaction which feeds upon the hope of outside help is suicidal politics. No outside help by itself can free us. It

is fantastic to believe that Subhas' army, no matter how large, can defeat the Allied Armies in India. If any army can defeat them it may possibly be the Japanese. But, if the Japanese defeat the British in India, they would not quietly hand over India to us—whatever the understanding between Tojo and Subhas. We must be ready in the event of an Axis-Allied clash in India to seize power ourselves. Only if we are ready to make this attempt can outside help, such as Subhas' National Army, be of value to us and Tojo be prevented from annexing India. It is difficult to say how far Subhas himself is conscious of this aspect of India's national strategy.

" This brings me to the question, what should we do when the war enters our doors. British policy has made the average Indian so anti-British that he is prepared if not to welcome the Japanese, at least to remain indifferent to the Anglo-Japanese conflict. This indifference will be our death. We must endeavour to remove it and in its place develop a positive policy of action. In the areas where war is waged or which the Japanese occupy or where they infiltrate, the foreigner's civil rule will weaken or come to an end. In these areas we must establish a Swaraj Government. In the name of this Government we must appeal to retreating units of the Indian Army to stay behind and become the people's army. From this day

we must prepare to establish such a government in the Eastern Province which in the course of time might embrace the entire nation. This preparatory work raises many questions, which cannot be discussed here. It is sufficient to point out the broad policy and invite the attention of fighters to it as well as of the people generally."

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE LAHORE BASTILLE

Lahore Fort has become notorious as the Bastille of India in which Jaiprakash, Congress Socialists and Forward Blocists were locked up and lashed. This Fort, incidentally, is the oldest Mogul Fort and was founded by Akbar, improved upon by Jehangir and embellished by Shah Jehan. Its Pictured Wall, Hall of Mirrors, Naulakha Pavillion, Gem Mosque, Hall of Forty Pillars, etc., are packed with art, romance and history. The treaty for the final annexation of the Punjab by the British was also signed here in the Hall of Mirrors. Therefore, it was as fit a place for Quit-India heroes as the Red Fort for the I.N.A. soldiers.

Rs. 10,000 for J. P.'s Head

Even though it is now more than two years and two months when the reputed Congress socialist leader, Mr. Jaiprakash Narain, was arrested, yet circumstances under which Mr. Jaiprakash was "captured" by the Punjab Police have remained an unsolved mystery. Circumstances of his arrest, the names of the persons who arrested him as also the place of his arrest have

remained a most guarded secret. Mr. Jaiprakash carried a reward of Rs. 10,000 "for his head". For various reasons the Punjab authorities succeeded in maintaining complete secrecy about Mr. J. P.'s arrest all these long years and even when the Punjab press tried to know the circumstances relating to his captivity, the Punjab authorities persistently refused to divulge any news beyond saying: "He was arrested in the Punjab."

It is learnt that J. P. was arrested in the moving Frontier Mail on the morning of September 18, 1943, between Amritsar and Lahore. Mr. Jaiprakash was travelling from somewhere on his way to some hill station in the north of the Punjab *via* Delhi.

It appears that the Punjab C.I.D. got information of J. P.'s journey through the Punjab in all probability from Delhi and made arrangements to catch India's Socialist Leader Number One by surprise when he least expected of being caught.

Mr. Jaiprakash had an absolutely comfortable journey all the way till the train reached Amritsar where he got up and took his tea. Hardly had he finished his cup and only a short while before the train moved, there stepped in his compartment one European and two Sikh C.I.D. officers, the European being one of the senior-most C.I.D. officials. They were dressed in plain

clothes and Mr. J. P. never doubted that they would be the persons who would arrest him. These officers did nothing until the train had left Amritsar and while the train was moving between Amritsar and Lahore, a distance of 35 miles, the European officer caught hold of Mr. Jaiprakash at the point of his pistol and the two Sikh officers helped their chief in holding up Mr. J. P. who stood surrounded by men with pistols in their hands while the train was going on at the highest speed. Mr. J. P. detrained at Mughalpura, a wayside station before Lahore, and was then removed to the Lahore Fort where he was detained and later on served with a notice in the second week of December, 1943, from the Government of India declaring him a State Prisoner.

While in detention a very high European official of the Punjab Government and a young Muslim Nawab and Knight were allowed to meet Mr. J. P. once a week in accordance with the provisions contained in Regulation III of 1854. Then long and endless interrogations commenced which lasted for an unknown time. Mr. Jaiprakash was some time later allowed, at his own cost, a copy each of the *Tribune* and the *Statesman*. But all news about war in the East, proceedings in the Indian Legislatures and editorial notes, etc., were clipped off before Mr. J. P. got the copies

of his newspapers.

Caught or Sold ?

Then it is doubtful whether he was really caught. It is more probable that he was "sold." A price was put upon his head. And somebody did get the blood money. He was caught in the Punjab. And so that seller might be a Punjabi. And if it is true, it will be a permanent blemish on the Land of Five Rivers. A question was put in the Punjab Assembly on November 3, 1943, but the Punjab Government refused to answer the question.

In reply to a question asked on behalf of S. Kapoor Singh, Syed Amjad Ali, Private Parliamentary Secretary, stated that Mr. Jaiprakash Narain, General Secretary, All-India Congress Socialist Party, was arrested recently in the Punjab under Rule 129 and was detained under Rule 26 of the Defence of India Rules. There had been no deterioration in his health which was good at the time of his arrest and no decrease in his weight which was normal at the time of his arrest. He was being given food prescribed for first-class Security Prisoners and was being given newspapers and books to read. It was not considered in public interests to tell when and where he was arrested and whether and to whom any reward was paid for helping the police in making the arrest. It was also not considered in public interest

to say whether the Government intended to try him in open court.

Mr. Pardiwala who came from Bombay to plead a habeas corpus petition on behalf of Jaiprakash was also arrested and harassed by the Punjab Police. Then came K. M. Munshi to plead the case of Mr. Pardiwala and Jaiprakash Narain. The following proceedings took place in the Central Legislative Assembly on November 13, 1943:

In the Central Assembly two adjournment motions tabled by Mr. Govind Deshmukh relating to Mr. Jaiprakash Narain and his counsel were ruled out by the chair.

The first motion sought to discuss the arrest of Mr. Pardiwala, who was defending Mr. Jaiprakash Narain and his removal to "an unknown destination."

The President: I suppose the Punjab Government ordered the arrest.

Mr. Deshmukh said that his information was that the arrest was made under the Government of India's order. He added that though the action was taken by the Provincial Government, it was on Government of India's authority.

Sir Reginald Maxwell, Home Member, stated that no order whatever was issued by the Government of India, nor was any action taken under their instructions.

The President observed that in view of the Home Member's statement, it must be assumed that some Provincial Government

was responsible for the order, and threfore the motion was out of order.

In the second motion Mr. Deshmukh made allegations of "inhuman" treatment of Mr. Jaiprakash Narain and in reply to the chair's question stated that Mr. Jaiprakash Narain was made to sit on a block of ice, and on a chair without a back. He was not allowed to sleep and was not properly fed.

The Home Member: How does the Hon'ble Member know all this?

Mr. Deshmukh said that he knew for a fact and that was why he was stating them.

The Home Member stated that Mr. Jaiprakash Narain was a prisoner of the Punjab Government and the adjournment motion was really directed against that Government and not against the Government of India. The matter, he added, had already been before the Punjab Legislature and had been under discussion there. It did not concern the Government of India at all.

Mr. Joshi asked under whose order was Mr. Jaiprakash arrested.

The Home Member stated that he was arrested because he was a fugitive from justice.

Mr. Deshmukh: Is not justice and humanity a concern of this House?

The Chair remarked that it was also the concern of the Provincial Legislature and added that there was no proof of the treat-

ment alleged in the motion.

Voices: Proof will be forthcoming. There is even a denial by the Government.

The motion was ruled out of order.

Pardiwala was released and straightway he left for Bombay. But all efforts to move a habeas corpus petition on behalf of Jaiprakash Narain proved unsuccessful. The Government simply refused to budge an inch. They made him a state prisoner and put him beyond the jurisdiction of the law courts.

The Curtain Falls

J. P. was to go to Kashmir from Calcutta. He took several days in reaching Delhi from Calcutta, because he took round about routes to dodge the C.I.D. He left Delhi on September 17, 1943, for Peshawar. The night passed without any incident and he slept well. Early in the morning of September 18 at Amritsar as J. P. went to the window of the compartment to ask for tea some men knocked at the door. Taking them to be passengers, he opened the window and asked them to get in as three berths were vacant in the compartment. They looked this side and that and did not get in. They had no luggage with them. J. P. looked into their faces and found out that the game was over and he was in the hands of the police. Very cautiously an Englishman accompanied by a few Sikhs

entered the compartment. He looked suspiciously and carefully on all the sides and said, "What is your name?" "Are you a railway officer?" enquired J. P. "No, I am not a railway officer, but I want to know your name," said the man a little sternly. J. P. said that his name was S. P. Mehta. The police officer after searching the whole compartment said, "I want to search you." A vigorous search was made, but nothing was found with J. P.

Police Triumph

The man who searched J. P. was William Robinson, Superintendent of Police, Lahore. He was surprised that J. P. had no pistol or any other thing with him. Robinson casually told J. P. that he had orders to shoot him, if he created any difficulty during the arrest. It was a "scoop" for Robinson. J. P. was the saddest man and Robinson the happiest. He had entitled himself to the reward and later was promoted to the Senior Superintendentship of Delhi.

"What was your feeling when you were arrested," I asked J. P. He replied, "I was shocked, I was very sorry." As he said this, I saw the shadow of that grief still lingering in his face. The very thought of that day's misfortune hurt him. "You were shocked and sorry, because you had left the work unfinished," I queried. "No,

not that, the work could not have been completed even if I were not arrested for months to come, but I was sorry that I could not continue the work," he said.

In Torture Chamber

The English officer and the Sikh policemen had come in mufti and had not brought handcuffs with them. They took out the straps of J. P.'s holdall and handcuffed him. The pilgrim of freedom became the prisoner of police. He was bundled into a car and carried to the Lahore Fort where he was dumped to spend many painful days in the torture chamber of the Indian Bastille. It was not before full sixteen months had passed that he was transferred to the Agra Central Prison from that Bastille.

The Lahore Bastille

After his arrest by the Punjab Police, as is well known, J. P. was for a longish period detained in the Lahore Fort. As from Caveeshar and so many others, this Bastille has earned a high chit from J. P. who calls it the "House of Torture". Perhaps the worst horror story I have come across in public print regarding the happenings in the Lahore Bastille is the one in which I read:

"I was conducted through the historical gate of the Lahore Fort on October 1, 1945, at about 11 p.m. Next day I was produced

before a police officer heavily drunk, who forthwith started showering foul and filthy abuse without rhyme or reason, not sparing the shining stars on the Indian political scene, naming one and all from Gandhi to Gopichand.

"The climax came when he ordered my trousers to be pulled off and threatened me with something un-natural. My trousers were actually pulled off. I escaped, because an abrupt telephone call took him away and he never returned that evening.

"At another time I was secured to a chair handcuffed behind the back and was kept in that state for about 68 hours."

The writer is an M.A. and at the time of his arrest was Assistant Secretary to the Chamber of Commerce. Can such things be allowed to be condoned in a hush-hush manner? In the name of decency the allegation must be disproved or the criminals brought to book.

Torture House

In an interview to the *Associated Press of India* Mr. Jaiprakash Narain narrated how he was treated in Lahore Fort which he described as Government of India's "Torture House".

He said that he was kept in a cell for 16 months continuously. He was not allowed to meet or talk to anybody. He was interrogated for about 50 days at a stretch from

12 to 14 hours a day by C.I.D. who had specially been brought from different provinces. During interrogation, he said, they poured volleys of abuses at him and the Congress leaders. During the last ten days of interrogation he was kept awake day and night and was not allowed to move from one place except for going to the latrine. While in the cell he lodged a protest that he should be allowed to exercise in the open. With great difficulty he was given permission, but was kept handcuffed while doing exercise.

He again made a protest and threatened to go on hunger-strike if his handcuffs were not removed while exercising. Later on he was transferred from the Lahore Fort.

Mr. Jaiprakash denied the reports that he was ever assaulted or made to sit on ice slabs.

He was released from the Agra Central Jail in the evening on April 11, 1946. Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia was also released with him.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

FORWARD TO FREEDOM

Passing out of the prison, Jaiprakash straightway plunged into the political whirlpool. His planning and peeping into the public mind started right at the prison-gate. He wasted no tide and time upon rest, relapse or revelation. Young India knew that the hero of the hour had come. All eyes were fixed upon his moves as well as the utterances of Jawaharlal.

" If the present negotiations with the Cabinet Mission break down, another struggle cannot be avoided," said Mr. Jaiprakash Narain to an *Associated Press of India* correspondent in an interview.

" I would take all steps to be fully prepared this time," he added.

Asked if independence could be achieved through negotiations and constitutional means, the socialist leader said: " The talks with the Cabinet Mission are not the result of goodwill on the part of British Labour Government. It is the result of the greatest national upheaval since 1857 and also of outside pressure and world situation."

Replying to another question Mr. Jaiprakash said: " We are on the stage of

formulating our party. Congress Socialist Party is part of the Congress. We must take stock of the present political situation and then formulate our plans."

When asked what was his view about the Communist Party, the socialist leader said : "I consider the communists to be 'Russian fifth columnists' and as such a perpetual danger to the country irrespective of what policy they may be following at a particular moment."

Long-Term Plan

"The Congress is working and is acting in a very undemocratic manner. It has shown a singular disregard for all democratic form of politics," said Mr. Jaiprakash Narain in a talk to press representatives regarding the stand of the Congress Socialist Party in relation to the political situation in the country. He said : "Even if the Congress accepts the long-term proposals we will not associate ourselves at any stage with the working out of the scheme. We will on the other hand tell the people that the struggle for Swaraj has not ended and that they would have to fight again and that they should prepare themselves from today for such a fight."

Mr. Narain said that the next A.-I.C.C. meeting was going to be not more than a farce because it is going to be faced with a *fait accompli*.

"Our approach to the present situation," said Mr. Narain, "is threefold: firstly, we wish to keep the perspective of the struggle before the people as against constitutionalism. Secondly, we wish to continue to prepare the masses for struggle whenever or in whatever form it may come. Thirdly, regarding constitutional issue we would attempt to place before the people a true picture of freedom of the people's. Swaraj and of the processes of constitution-making. The present Constituent Assembly will not be a true Constituent Assembly as it will not be brought into being by the people themselves but by the British Government. The method of its composition and other details have been set by a foreign Government and not by the people. It meets under the ægis of a foreign Government which means the Constituent Assembly will not be a sovereign body as it will not be formed by the people of India. Any kind of weightage or parity is wholly undemocratic."

Industrial Unrest

One hundred and sixty-one industrial disputes, involving 1,05,257 workers, is the toll taken by what is described as the "widespread industrial unrest" in India, during the first five postwar months, wrote an *Associated Press of India* correspondent.

The total loss of working hours due to strikes and lock-outs during these five

months, August, September, October, November and December last year, was 6,12,398.

The toll taken by industrial disputes during the first seven months of 1946 is estimated to be nearly three times the figures quoted above. And this does not include the latest and the biggest of the recent strikes, the postal and telegraph.

During the past six months, strikes in textile mills have resulted in a total loss of over 700 million yards of cloth, thus enhancing the cloth shortage in the country.

"The cause of this widespread industrial unrest lies in the high cost of living and the steadily and rapidly growing demand of the industrial workers for a better standard of living," said a Labour Department official of the Government of India in Bombay commenting on the recent waves of strikes. The cost of living in almost all industrial cities is about two and a half times before the war. In Nagpur and Jubbulpore, the living cost during recent months has been higher than in Bombay.

Causes of Industrial Unrest

On August 14, 1946, the Congress Working Committee in a statement expressed sympathy with the working class in its straggle to improve its economic condition and urged on Government and employers in the country to take early steps to

satisfy the legitimate needs and aspirations of the working class.

The statement points out that avoidable strikes cannot have the backing of public opinion in view of the need of the country for more goods and services. Refusal to take advantage of available means of settlement and arbitration constitute a distinct disservice to the community and the working class itself. The Committee also regrets the growing lack of discipline and disregard of obligations on the part of workers as evident in recent labour disputes.

The statement says: "The Working Committee view with deep concern the intense widespread labour unrest which has in recent months involved numerous industries and services in the country in large scale and prolonged stoppages which entail a heavy material loss and serious hardships to the community as well as the working class. The Committee are aware of the fact that labour upheaval through which the country has been passing is largely occasioned by serious privations to which the workers have been subjected in consequence of the tremendous economic maladjustments created by the war, especially excessive rise in the cost of living that has remained uncompensated to a very large extent. The Committee are further of the opinion that labour troubles in the country have been

aggravated by total absence of a well-defined national plan or policy in dealing with claims of the working class, by delay in redressing grievances by means of conciliation, arbitration and adjudication and by the confusion arising out of unco-ordinated action taken in the matter in different parts of the country."

Gandhi-Jinnah Formula

In all his negotiations with Congress leaders, Mr. Jinnah has been insisting on the Muslim League being recognised as the sole representative of the Muslim community. So far he has not succeeded in getting that certificate from the Congress, which itself represents very large sections of non-League Muslims. But it seems that during the Delhi talks Mr. Jinnah was able to secure the acceptance by Mahatma Gandhi of a formula which recognised the "unquestionable right" of the League to represent the Muslims of India. This fact is revealed in the Nehru-Jinnah correspondence. There is little in the published correspondence, except of course the terms of the formula, that had not become known to the public during the negotiations. This formula says: "The Congress does not challenge and accepts that the Muslim League now is the authoritative representative of an overwhelming majority of the Muslims of India. As such, and in accordance with democratic

principles, they alone have today an unquestionable right to represent the Muslims of India. But the Congress cannot agree that any restrictions or limitations should be put upon the Congress to choose such representatives as they think proper from among the members of the Congress as their representatives." Mahatma Gandhi, it is apparent, accepted the formula without the prior consent of the Congress. He realised his mistake later on and confessed at a prayer meeting that "he had been guilty of acting without closely reading it." The Mahatma is not even a four-anna member of the Congress; and, as he himself has so often stated, he cannot commit that body in any way. During his 17-day negotiations with Mr. Jinnah at Bombay, he took up the position—and in our opinion rightly—that he had been conferring with the League President in his individual capacity and not on behalf of the Congress and that if a settlement were reached between the two, he could at best only recommend to the Congress to accept it. The League President took exception to it; and in one of his letters he actually said that it was no use carrying on the negotiations with a person who had no *locus standi* in the Congress organisation. Mahatma Gandhi's position vis-a-vis the Congress has remained the same as it was at the time the Bombay negotiations took place. Mr. Jinnah should have,

therefore, known that the acceptance of a formula by Mahatma Gandhi alone did not commit the Congress in any way. His insistence on the unqualified acceptance by the Congress of that formula as the basis of further discussions was the outcome of his desire to put the Congress in the wrong. But in this game he has not succeeded.

In his very first letter dated October 6, 1946, to Mr. Jinnah, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru stated in unequivocal terms that the formula was not "happily worded." He suggested a modification in the formula, and the modified formula was to the following effect: "We are willing, as a result of the elections, to accept the Muslim League as the authoritative organisation of an overwhelming majority of Muslims and that, as such, and in accordance with democratic principles, they have today the unquestionable right to represent the Muslims of India, provided that for identical reasons the League recognises the Congress as an authoritative organisation representing all non-Muslims and such Muslims as have thrown in their lot with the Congress." The proviso was absolutely necessary to safeguard the position of the Congress as a non-communal body. Anticipating that the proviso would not be acceptable to Mr. Jinnah, Pandit Nehru said that really speaking no formula was necessary and that "each organisation may stand on its merits." To

this reasonable suggestion Mr. Jinnah's reply was: "I don't think we can make any further progress until the formula is accepted by you as a basis upon which we can proceed to discuss other points; nor can I agree with you that no formula is necessary." If the Muslim League is the sole representative body of Muslims of India, as Mr. Jinnah claims it to be, why does he insist on the Congress accepting that claim? Why should not each organisation stand on its merits?

Whatever the defects of the Gandhi-Jinnah formula, it did recognise the right of the Congress "to choose such representatives as they think proper from amongst the members of the Congress as their representatives." Pandit Nehru and his Congress colleagues, while accepting the formula in spite of its not being happily worded, stated that it should be understood that the Congress had the right to appoint a Muslim out of their quota and that "the Congress position in regard to the Nationalist Muslims and the smaller minorities should not be challenged." Had Mr. Jinnah been anxious for a settlement, he would have accepted this position, especially because the League itself decided subsequently to join the Interim Government without any conditions; and this in spite of the fact that the Interim Government would contain a Congress Muslim and three representatives of

the minorities approved of by the Congress. The correspondence discloses that Pandit Nehru and his Congress colleagues were anxious to meet the Muslim League as friends with no mental reservations and to have a responsible Cabinet at the Centre where all problems were to be solved by the Cabinet itself by mutual consultation, and not by the intervention of the Viceroy. At the same time it discloses that throughout the negotiations Mr. Jinnah's main anxiety was to secure the acceptance by the Congress of his claim that the League was the sole representative body of the Muslim community. No wonder that in spite of the best efforts of the Congress leaders to have a Congress-League *rapprochement* they did not succeed in their objective. The failure of these efforts is a proof, if any were required, that in his present refractory mood Mr. Jinnah cannot be reconciled.

Duty of Congressmen

Questioned why he agreed to join the Working Committee in Delhi when he had declined to do so in Bombay he said :

" At Bombay when Dr. Lohia and I had declined the President's invitation, it was not on any grounds of principle, but only because of peculiar situation obtaining then. The Congress Socialist Party existed not to oppose the Congress organisation.

" The Congress particularly was faced

with a critical situation and it had become the duty of Congressmen, whatever their differences, to stand together and to face the common danger and the common task together. Furthermore, all the prominent members of the Working Committee having joined the Central Government, I felt there was need in some manner to emphasise the popular, non-governmental, revolutionary character of the Congress.

"I need hardly add that if I ever find that my being in the Working Committee comes in the way of my present work of preparing for revolutionary struggle, I shall not hesitate to leave the Committee, as I had left it for different reasons before. I should add further that in the present circumstances, I believe that being on the Committee would help rather than hinder me in this work.

"Fundamentally our reading of the present political situation has not changed. The formation of the Interim Government does not mean that the struggle for freedom has ended. That struggle remains, and our main task, that is, the main task of the Congress and the Indian people, still remains the same as before, that is to say, preparation for the struggle for freedom. We were opposed to the whole constitutional scheme, but when a decision has finally been taken and an Interim Government has been formed with Congress co-operation, we, as

Congressmen, cannot oppose or obstruct it. Rather it becomes our duty to strengthen our organisation in accordance with and in furtherance of the basic Congress policy of independence.

"Even Pakistan the Congress is prepared to concede provided the people of Pakistan desire a separate state by free plebiscite held in a free India.

"But Mr. Jinnah wants neither mutual settlement nor impartial arbitration. He merely asks Mr. Churchill to stop India from marching on to freedom. That is all that Pakistan means to Mr. Jinnah.

"The British have ruled over India for nearly a century but it never occurred to Mr. Jinnah to launch direct action against them. Now when his country has reached the threshold of freedom, he is threatening murder, loot and arson. He is angry with the Congress because it has dared to fight the British and has succeeded at least in forming a responsible Provisional Government at the Centre. But, I am sure, Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Churchill cannot deflect the course of Indian freedom."

"The Central and Provincial Governments," he added, "must deal firmly with civil disturbances of any anti-social and anti-national character. At the same time these Governments must do everything possible to find out and satisfy all reasonable grievances and aspirations of the

Muslims as a community. The Congress organisation too must ceaselessly attempt to reach Muslims of all classes, particularly the Muslim masses, and explain to them fully its policies and activities."

Three Socialist Resolutions

In September, 1946, the National Executive of the Congress Socialist Party passed three resolutions, regarding the Indian troops abroad, Royal Indian Navy men and the situation in Goa.

"In regard to foreign affairs it should be the policy of the Interim Government to take, whenever possible, such action as will aid Asiatic and African people to establish for themselves sovereign national freedom within their territories. In pursuance of this policy the earliest tasks that face the Government are the withdrawal of Indian troops, who are being used by Britain in Indonesia and Iraq.

"According to announced British intentions the troops are to be withdrawn from Indonesia some time in November. The withdrawal appears tardy to the millions of Indonesian nationalists and its slow pace is of advantage to the Dutch who are increasing their armed strength hourly in Java and Sumatra. Further delay should be prevented, and along with complete withdrawal of all Indians the Interim Government should recognise the Republican Government,

under Dr. Sœkarno, as the rightful Government of Indonesia and establish such diplomatic relations with that Government as are proper to a free and independent country.

"In Iraq the number of Indian troops has been recently reinforced as a measure of security for the interests of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in South Iran. As it is of vital interest to India to be on terms of closest amity with our neighbours of the Middle East, all attempts by Britain to embroil us in bloc-diplomacy or in preventing the Middle-Eastern peoples from utilising their oil and other resources in their national interests should be sternly resisted. As a first step in this policy immediate withdrawal of the Indian troops in Iraq must be carried out."

When the men of the Royal Indian Navy surrendered in February last, they did so on the express assurance of the Commander-in-Chief that there would be no victimisation, says the resolution on Royal Indian Navy.

Complaining about the way the men were discharged, the resolution adds that the employment exchanges as well as Government departments were instructed not to consider these men for employment.

Now that the Interim Government is in saddle these men and officers expect that their cases should be thoroughly examined

and justice be done to them either by re-employing them or by giving them suitable compensation. The resolution declares that most of the demands for which they struck work have still not been met.

The resolution concludes: "The Congress Socialist Party is entirely in sympathy with the demands which it considers to be imminently reasonable and requests Pandit Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and the Defence Member to immediately institute a thorough inquiry into these demands and deal justly with the men who fought so valiantly against the accumulated injustices of years at the hands of the Naval authorities."

The resolution on civil liberties in Goa *inter alia* says: "Recent developments make it possible for the Indian people to exercise their power with some authority. The Goan question calls for the intervention of the Interim Government and we hope the rights and liberties of our fellow-men in Goa will find realisation by the joint efforts of our people and our Government."

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

RIOTS AND REVOLUTION

While Jinnah hopes to get Pakistan through riots, Jaiprakash aims at Complete Independence through a scientific revolution. But Pakistan is not independence and nor are riots a revolution. The League is essentially playing the British game and strengthening the stranglehold of imperialism on the life and liver of India.

Muslim League and Riots

On October 3, 1946, Mr. Jaiprakash Narain flatly stated that the country-wide riots are "political riots deliberately engineered by the Muslim League as part of their direct action programme."

The socialist leader, who had then joined the Congress Working Committee in response to the appeal of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, agreed that there "might be retaliation from the other communities." "But such retaliatory communalism is equally bad," he added.

Discussing the tense communal situation throughout the country with an *Associated Press of America* correspondent, Mr. Jaiprakash Narain said: "My only

solution of the problem is freedom—complete and real."

"Any other solution will be putting the cart before the horse," he said, in reply to a question whether a Hindu-Muslim settlement cannot be achieved before launching an offensive against the British.

"Because the British are here, they encourage all internal quarrels. A study of the history of the communal problem shows that whenever there was a possibility of the communities coming together, the British have stepped in to prevent it," he said.

He said he had always looked upon the Muslim League as a "British front." "With the British out of this country, this front will collapse by itself," he added.

"The Congress will not budge an inch from the stand it has taken on the question of the inclusion of a Nationalist Muslim in the present Interim Government," he declared, answering a question whether a settlement was not possible if the Congress gave up the Nationalist Muslim seat in the Government.

"Sixty years of Congress history cannot be negatived in a moment," he said, adding the Congress has gone "as far as possible to satisfy the Muslim League's reasonable demands."

Continuing, he said the Interim Government was "only a stroke of fortune"

for the Congress. The British are now endeavouring to get the Muslim League into the Cabinet so that there might be differences inside the Cabinet, he stated, adding this would allow Lord Wavell to act as the arbitrator. When the Muslim League trying to organise the students, workers and merchants on a communal basis, the British would get a chance to continue their stay in India, he asserted.

Questioned about the League's direct action programme, the socialist leader warmed up and declared: "I am not afraid of direct action. Why should we? Has any country attained independence or come to its own without troubles and even civil war?"

"But I think the direct action programme will recoil on Mr. Jinnah's own head," he said.

Do away with Governors

In the next revolution, Mr. J. P. Narain has stated that the leaders should arrest the Governors instead of letting the Governors arrest them. The same idea, in another tune, was echœd by Pandit Nehru. On October 29, 1946, replying to a supplementary by Mr. Sanyal in the Central Assembly, Pandit Nehru said that the Government of India's main purpose in existence was to gain complete independence for this country.

Mr. Sri Prakash: There is great dissatisfaction at the existence of Governors themselves.

Pandit Nehru: With the coming of independence there ceases to be any necessity for Governors.

Mr. Ahmed Jaffar asked whether Government was aware of the general feeling in the country that for any future appointments of Governors, Indians should be chosen instead of imposing foreigners on this country.

Pandit Nehru: I am not sure that the Government agrees with the views put forward by the honourable member. We want to do away with Governors, not replace them with others of their type whatever their skin may be.

Replying to Mr. Ahmed Jaffar, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that Governors were appointed by His Majesty under Section 48 (1) of the Government of India Act, 1935, but it is obviously desirable that the Government of India should be consulted in the matter and that their views should carry weight.

Mr. Jaffar: Will the Honourable Member communicate to H.M.G. that there is great dissatisfaction in this country over appointing a particular individual to all officiating appointments of provincial Governors?

Pandit Nehru: I know there is a great

deal of dissatisfaction about various Governors in the country, quite a number of them, but what particular person is referred to I do not know.

British Digging Ditches

The British are digging ditches in our path to freedom by creating civil strife. If the Hindus and the Muslims fail to take a warning and fall into these ditches, there will be no coming out of them for years, declared Mr. Jaiprakash Narain at a midnight public meeting under the chairmanship of Mr. Abdul Ahmad Khan, President of the Gorakhpur Town Congress Committee.

Mr. Jaiprakash Narain said: "The communal disturbances in Noakhali benefit neither the Hindus nor the Muslims, but only the British. It is alleged that the disturbances have been started by the Muslim League, but it should not be forgetten that behind the League is the British Government. If the Hindus start attacking the Muslims in their majority provinces, it will serve no other purpose than strengthening the British hold on India, because for the suppression of these riots we shall have to seek the help of British forces, which will give an opportunity to the British to justify their presence in this country before the eyes of the world."

Mr. Jaiprakash added that the day was not far off, when Muslim leadership would pass on to a Muslim like Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Maulana Husain Ahmad Madni, who had suffered for the cause of the country. Even if at this late hour, Mr. Jinnah joined us, we would take no time in driving away the British. The Muslim League today was confined to Pakistan only, but if India became independent, the Muslims of this country could help other Islamic countries in achieving their independence.

Concluding Mr. Jaiprakash said that a fight with the British Government in the near future was inevitable and inescapable and the Indians must concentrate all their energies on organising themselves.

British-League Coalition

On November 10, 1946, in an interview with the *Associated Press of America*, Mr. Jaiprakash said : " Every Englishman in India is a Muslim Leaguer ; not that he loves but he finds the Leaguer a convenient tool in his hands.

" This becomes much cleared when we pause to consider that neither the Hindu nor the Muslim community stands to gain anything at all by killing each other. The British have everything to gain in this internal turmoil. That has been ever their game. The overall and the prime cause for

the beginning of these riots is the policy of the League in preaching hatred and bitterness and inciting to violence by appeal to direct action.

"I am absolutely certain that behind this policy of the League is the unhidden hand of the British or else the League would have no courage to start on such a scale."

Mr. Jaiprakash Narain visited some of the worst areas in Bihar in the company of Pandit Nehru.

The socialist leader said: "I personally visited Nagar Nausa and discussed the situation with the non-officials and the military officer commanding the area. Fantastic reports have appeared in the press about Nagar Nausa killing. In my estimate only 40 were killed in the area by rioting and when the military, taking a serious view of the situation, opened fire about 100 more were killed by military action.

"Some reports have been published of the military excesses when restoring order but it is difficult to say how far they are true.

"My impression after the tour of the areas is that the situation is definitely under control and mob frenzy is positively going down.

"It is very difficult to give accurate figures of casualties but the number cannot be over 2000 killed including those killed by

military action.

"After the immediate remedy is obtained by the use of force against all mischief-markers, the next important task is to bring back the public mind to normal health by sound campaign in their midst."

Dealing with some of the causes that started the Bihar trouble, Mr. Narain said: "Firstly, there was the mass feeling aroused by the Noakhali tragedies. Secondly, criminal elements and anti-Congress organisations, including big landholders—the Congress stands pledged to the abolition of the zamindari system—worked from behind. Thirdly, Muslim League lunatics and hirelings started some trouble here and there. Fourthly, and the most important of all, the British element in the police and civil services had a hand in the whole thing, especially those who stood to suffer under the Congress Government for their activities in crushing the 1942 August rising."

Mr. Jaiprakash Narain said that "coalition Government will be no solution to the present ills. Real coalition can only come about if there is understanding and spirit of goodwill between the parties concerned.

"To demand coalition at the point of dagger is blackmail and can lead to no coalition."

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

RESIGNED AND DISMISSED

The Indian National Congress needed the Congress socialists at the Tripuri Congress and also during the Quit-India Movement, but now it needs them not—neither against the British who have decided to go, nor against the Forward Blocists who have already gone. So the presence of the Congress socialists has become a nuisance in the Congress. Since Jaiprakash refused to join the Working Committee at first, then he joined, and recently resigned, the Congress High Command has made a short work of the Congress socialists and dismissed them all. Henceforth they will be only socialists and not "Congress" socialists.

Resignation of J. P.

At New Delhi on 28th December, 1947, Mr. Jaiprakash Narain, the Congress socialist leader, told press correspondents that he foresaw the possibility—if not the probability—of a breakdown of the Interim Government within the next six months. Such a breakdown, he added, might precipitate a revolutionary struggle against the British, on the basis of a constitution framed

by the Constituent Assembly. No organisation except the Congress could, in his opinion, launch the struggle.

"Whether the present situation in the country requires an active struggle or not, I definitely think that it requires that we do prepare for an active struggle. We do not want to be caught napping," he declared.

He referred to the differences between himself and the Congress Working Committee on recent developments and said he had written to the Congress President on these and had asked for permission to resign from the Working Committee. "As far as I am concerned, my resignation is certain," he remarked.

What would be the issue on which a breakdown might occur? asked a correspondent.

Mr. Jaiprakash said: "That will take me to a discussion of British policy as I understand it today. On the one hand, the Britsh talk of their preparedness to leave India and, on the other, they wish to utilise every reactionary and anti-nationalist element in this country to prevent their leaving India. By reactionary elements I definitely mean the communal elements, outstanding among which is the Muslim League. Every communal element in this country is standing in the path of freedom, for instance, the Hindu Mahasabha. I suppose the greatest supporters of this policy

of underhand sabotage are the communalists and the princes. Next will come big business with this difference that the capitalists would want some advance, not freedom but self-government, so that they might have a freer hand in the economic development of the country. But they would certainly come in the way of revolution, even a national revolution. Big business will certainly do everything to prevent a revolutionary outbreak in this country, even if it means a compromise with freedom."

False Hopes Aroused

Referring to Congress leaders' statements which gave the impression that freedom was round the corner, after the issue of the State Paper, Mr. Jaiprakash said : "I think they aroused false hopes. Freedom is not round the corner in the sense that the Constituent Assembly is going to give us freedom in a short time. I also think freedom is round the corner, but before we get freedom, an all-out struggle, I suppose, is necessary. The obstacles put in our path cannot be removed except by a revolutionary struggle, unless of course, we compromise on our principles."

Amplifying his allusion to differences between himself and the Congress Working Committee, he said : "As far as the constitutional developments are concerned, there has been a fundamental difference from the very

beginning, but in spite of that difference, I agreed when Pandit Nehru asked me in Delhi, to join the Working Committee after the outbreak of the Calcutta riots and so on. I said we might stand together and face this common danger jointly. So the fundamental difference is not the only thing that has made me decide to leave the committee. There are other considerations also, into which I would not like to go till I have had a discussion with Acharya Kripalani."

He explained that his decision to resign was an individual, and not a Congress Socialist Party decision. The issue would come up when the Congress Socialist Party executive met, just before the meeting of the A.-I.C.C.

Mr. Jaiprakash agreed broadly with Pandit Nehru's resolution before the Constituent Assembly. If the Congress stuck to that policy, it would coincide with the Congress Socialist Party's view-point.

Jinnah Afraid of Freedom

"I am one of those in the Congress who would rather leave the Muslim League alone," he said in answer to a question about the absence of the Muslim League approval of the resolution. "I have said so many times that I do not distinguish between the Muslim League and the British. To me, the League is a British front. If the League, for instance, comes into the Constituent

Assembly, the Assembly will become what the Interim Government has become and all its capacity to work towards freedom will be destroyed. Mr. Jinnah's great objection to the policy of the Congress towards the Constituent Assembly is that the Congress wants to make it a sovereign body. Mr. Jinnah is afraid of sovereignty and freedom. He would not like the Constituent Assembly to become sovereign but would like to work under the ægis of the Viceroy or the British Government."

Mother of Indian Revolution

Does it mean that if the League does not come into the Constituent Assembly, the Constituent Assembly, as it is constituted today, could lead to freedom?"

Mr. Jaiprakash Narain said: "I would repeat that in no case is the Constituent Assembly going to lead to freedom, but if the League does not come in and the Congress sticks to its fundamental policies, then the Constituent Assembly will lead to a struggle for freedom—not towards freedom but the struggle towards freedom. I have said that the Constituent Assembly, as I visualise it, might become the mother of the Indian revolution. Left to itself, the Congress should not take more than six months to draft a constitution and we should then try to put that constitution into force. Pandit Nehru says we want a republic, let them ask Lord

Wavell to hand over power. Probably, Lord Wavell will not do it and that would lead to a struggle on a very high level."

No Business with League

There were two ways of working the Constituent Assembly, he went on. One was to try to get whatever was possible out of it, which could not be full freedom, and the other was to stick to our principles and refuse to compromise on any issue and convert the Constituent Assembly into an organ of struggle like the French National Assembly.

The League has the confidence of a great part of the Muslim electorate in the country. How do you intend to bring the 90 million Muslims into line with the nationalist programme?

Mr. Jaiprakash said: "First by doing no business with the Muslim League. If the British want to settle with the League, I would say: All right, you settle with the Muslim League and give them all power, but if you require me to go and talk to Mr. Jinnah, I am not prepared. You must recognise that the Congress is representative of the people of this country.

"I would not leave it at that. I would go to the Muslims directly and appeal to them on the basis of nationalism, national struggle and socialism. I would place economic issues before them. I think, in the

present circumstances, I would not meet with a very large measure of success, but I do not apprehend that in the event of a national struggle the Muslim masses will actively oppose it. At the most, they might be apathetic towards it and keep out, but if the struggle develops on the lines I visualise, for instance, if I say in the course of the struggle, 'the land belongs to the peasants, take it.' I think a large number of Muslim peasants might be drawn into the struggle. What the Congress will do, I cannot say."

Mr. Jaiprakash made it clear that no organisation except the Congress could launch a national struggle in this country.

Two Forces Working in India

Mr. Jaiprakash said that he was not foreseeing civil war but he saw no alternative to a war with the British, say a war with the British started by the Constituent Assembly. In the course of a war like that, he did not fear there would be a large-scale rioting.

"I do not fear that the war will be converted into a civil war though that will be the British game. To the British, even to Lord Pethick-Lawrence, a settlement between the Congress and the League is a settlement between two communities of India. I was amazed to read that statement coming from him. Either he is completely misinformed, or he deliberately

says it."

There were two forces in India : First, the force of nationalism represented by the Congress, the T.U.C., the Students' Congress, Merchants' Chambers of Commerce and so on —a composite body not based on communities, but either on class interests or national interests.

Secondly, the parallel development, very much helped by the British Government, of political forces based on communalism, like the Muslim League, the Scheduled Castes Federation, Muslim Chambers of Commerce, Muslim Students' Congress, Muslim Trade Unions, etc. Ultimately, there could be no compromise between these two. There might be a temporary settlement but ultimately one of them would have to go under. "India's future very much depends on whether the forces of nationalism win, or the forces of communalism win. If the forces of communalism win, it will be a British victory."

Position of British Socialists

Will your struggle be against Lord Wavell or your fellow-socialists in Britain?

Jaiprakash replied : "Unfortunately our fellow-socialists seem to be following a policy which is leading us into a struggle with them. After all, they are the Government and Lord Wavell merely represents them. He might try to sabotage their policy, I do not know

to what extent he has, but if he has, he ought to be removed and someone else ought to be sent in his place. The socialist brotherhood seems to be behaving rather queerly everywhere. The Stalin brotherhood behaves more or less in the same fashion and Blum and his French socialists are following the same policy."

The Congress Socialist Party, said Mr. Jaiprakash, had very considerable strength in the Congress organisation. He would put it at 50 per cent, but the Congress machine was like any other machine and it seemed very difficult to capture it. "But I am quite optimistic about the general growth of the party within the Congress. What we may have to do, in certain circumstances, to capture the machine, I do not know."

No Approval from Parliament

Replying to further questions, Mr. Jaiprakash said that there was no question of the constitution framed by the Constituent Assembly being approved by Parliament. We should not ask or wait for their approval, but go ahead with our decisions and enforce them. In the enforcement of those decisions, he visualised a conflict with the British if in the meanwhile, we had not given up the fundamentals.

When his attention was drawn to a report that he had called for the arrest of

the British Governors in the next struggle, Mr. Jaiprakash said: "The arrest of British Governors, picked out of a two-hour speech, is sensational, but it loses much of its meaning. By a struggle in India, we have so far understood the filling up of jails. What I did say in that speech was to debunk that idea. We have left that stage behind. At a certain stage, jail-going is necessary when the people are cowed down and so on. We had a leader who put self-respect in us, by giving us the programme of jail-going. But we have left it behind. In the next struggle, I said in this connection, if anybody has to go to jail, it will be the other party and not us. In a conflict, naturally the British will put us in jail in some places, and we will put them in jail in others."

Change in Indian Army

"For instance, if there was an uprising in a particular district and the collector there decided to go over to the side of the revolutionaries, he would administer the district on behalf of the revolutionaries. If not, he would try to arrest the revolutionaries while the revolutionaries would try to get him arrested. But the arrest of Governors is not the main programme. The main programme is the rising of the people, general strikes and so on."

Clarifying his point further, he said, "It will be a struggle not like the old

struggles—a slave India fighting for freedom —but a free India fighting to protect her freedom from aggressors. In that case, there is no question of jail-going and instead of our being put into jail, those who come in our way—whether they are Governors or British officials or Indian officials will have to be dealt with—something parallel to the American revolution."

How much opposition do you think the British Government can be expected to put up in the event of the outbreak of a revolution?

Jaiprakash said: "I do not think very much, in the present world context."

Asked whether he expected the Indian army would join the revolution, Mr. jaiprakash said, "I think there has been a great change in the Indian forces. Their experience during the last war, the I.N.A., the general political ferment in the country and all that, has affected them, but to what extent it is difficult to say. Of one thing I am certain, I do not think the British will be able to use the Indian army effectively against the revolution."

Towards Revolution

At New Delhi on 29th December, 1946, Mr. Jaiprakash Narain, addressing the 10th session of the All-India Students Congress, which began its four-day session said: "We are fast moving towards a revolution.

This may be several times bigger in intensity than the 1942 revolution."

Mr. Jaiprakash, outlining the programme of the coming struggle, said that it was going to be on the lines of the 1942 movement. All college and school students, he said, must come out and participate in the fight. All mills, factories and other places must go on strike. No one should go to the jails, but on the other hand arrest the Governors, the collectors and all those who sided with the British Government. Every 'thana', 'tehsil' and district should be occupied and peoples' raj established. If, he said, the fight continued for three months, they could easily defeat the British Government in this country. The British Government was on its last legs and it was time to strike.

Mr. Jaiprakash asked the students to keep the coming struggle in the forefront and adjust their decisions accordingly during this conference.

The socialist leader attacked the Muslim League and said that Mr. Jinnah was in alliance with the British Government and was creating obstacles in the way of India's freedom. He said that the Muslim League had not joined the Interim Government to run the Government or to do any good to the Muslims. If they joined the Constituent Assembly they would do so not because they wanted to frame the con-

stitution of free India but in order to retard the progress of the Assembly. All the communal riots, which had occurred in the country, were not communal riots but political riots. The decisions about such riots were not taken in this country but in England.

Communalism, Mr. Jaiprakash said, was the biggest agent of British imperialism in this country. Mr. Jaiprakash asked the students to come out and meet this danger. There were several communal organisations in the country of which the Muslim League was the most important. There was no doubt that majority of the Muslims were with the Muslim League. But if the students went to the Muslim masses as soldiers of freedom and with a revolutionary programme, he had no doubt that they would listen to them. In the beginning they might throw stones at them.

Mr. Jaiprakash asked the students to prepare for the final struggle for freedom. "It is not going to be a child's play, but a fierce and grim fight, much more fiercer than the 1857 and 1942 struggles." They would not only have to sacrifice in thousands, but in lakhs. Their slogan should be "Do or die."

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

A SOCIALIST STATE FOR INDIA

The Socialist Party of India under Jaiprakash is working for a Socialist State in India. The ideals for socialism in India have been summed up by Jaiprakash in his speeches and writings. The following extracts from his writings sum up the philosophical outlook of the socialists in India:

Why Socialism ?

The first thing to remember about socialism is that it is a system of social reconstruction. It is not a code of personal conduct; it is not something which you and I can practise. Nor is it a hot-house growth. When we speak of applying socialism to India, we mean the reorganisation of the whole economic and social life of the country; its farms, factories, schools, theatres. No doubt, it is possible to run the life of a single village or the business of a single factory on socialist lines. But, that would not be socialism. The picture cast by a prism on the laboratory wall has seven colours, but it is not the rainbow of the skies.

It follows, therefore, that those who desire to construct a socialist society should

have the power and the requisite sanction behind them to do so. No group of idealists can build up socialism unless it has power in its hands.

What is meant by power? If one looks at the world of today, one finds that the instrument through which groups, parties, individuals attempt to enforce their plans, their schemes, over the community, the nation, is the State. When the State is in your hands, you can legislate, you can use the whole magnificent apparatus of propaganda and education that modern science has made available ; you can enforce your will. And, if there is resistance you can use the coercive arm of the State—the police and the army—to crush it. Behind every piece of legislation lies the State's power to persuade and, ultimately, to coerce.

No party in the world of today can build up socialism unless it has the machinery of the State in its hands ; whether it has come to acquire it through the will of the electorate or by a coup d'etat is irrelevent to our discussion just now.

As a corollary to this, we can state another proposition : A party in power, *i.e.*, in possession of the State, may reasonably hope to establish socialism, provided it has either of two things : sufficient power of coercion to put down resistance or sufficient popular support to be able to deal with opposition. Both in the end mean the

same thing. The coercive powers of a Socialist State, if they exist at all, are bound to be derived from popular support—the "unpopular" support, that is, the support of the classes of property, being rather thrown on the opposite side.

I have said that a party in possession of the State and with the means to keep itself there, can, if it so desired, create a socialist heaven on the earth. What must it exactly do to begin doing this? Must it haul up all the "exploiters" and pot-bellied capitalists and have them shot? Must Pandit Jawaharlal, supposing he became the Premier or President of Socialist India, line up taluqdars of the U.P. and have them blown up to bits? Must he sieze the treasures of the rajas and the mahajans and distribute them to the people—equally, of course? Must he turn over the Tata Iron Works, for instance, to the workers employed there, and leave them to make as good or bad a business of it as they please? Must he split up all the land in the country, divide the total acreage by the total population, and hand over a little plot to each individual? Will that be socialism?

No. Socialism is something more sensible, more scientific, more civilised than all that.

What, then, must Pandit Jawaharlal do?

We can find the answer to this question,

if we take a look at the society we live in—here and abroad.

Socialism and India

We have been accused of attempting to import a foreign system into India, which has its own peculiar problems and solutions thereof.

I wish to make it clear that we have no desire to disregard either the peculiar problems of India or its historic cultural background. It would indeed be utterly un-Marxian to do so. We have, in fact, examined to the best of our ability the so-called "Indian" solutions; and we are satisfied that under present conditions they cannot take the place of socialism. This is no reflection on the genius of the social philosophers of ancient India. Unfortunately for them Indian society has changed so drastically, its problems have been transformed so radically, that their ideas hardly bear any relation to present facts. There are certain broad principles which hold good in all ages and climes. But broad principles are of little value when concrete means are sought for the removal of concrete evils. And it is here—not in their conception of general, social and individual good—that the old systems and the new reflections break down completely.

The old principles were laid down when civilisation was much simpler than at

present. Neither industry nor agriculture had developed far enough to make it possible for men to exploit the labour of others to any considerable extent. All production was on a small individual scale. Population was low and Nature kind and bountiful. It was possible for any able-bodied man to clear the jungle and settle down with his family on the reclaimed land.

From this it is a far cry to our present agrarian and industrial problems. Landlordism is an un-Indian institution, mills and factories are also new to the country. New likewise are all the problems that have been created by the imperialist domination. The basic economic problem of our society—the problem of exploitation of the many by the few—which arises, from the monopoly of land and other instruments of production—did not exist in its present universal form at the time of Manu.

Socialism Not Bound by National Frontiers

This problem, which we find has no relation with India's ancient past, has, on the other hand, a basic unity with the problems of the modern world. In China, Japan, England, France, Germany, the United States of America cast majority of the people has to face essentially the same problem. The development of the powers of production, in other words, the invention of steam and electrical power, has given

birth to, and reared, the most extensive and thorough system of human exploitation ever known—the system of capitalist production and distribution.

Socialism, which is an inevitable reaction to this system, is, therefore, not bound by national frontiers. Its home is as much in England as in Japan, as much in Germany as in China, in the United States of America as in India. Wherever conditions of capitalist exploitation exist, socialism too will spread to the four corners of the globe.

India can be, and, events are showing, is no exception.

The existence of feudalistic relics in India modifies its problems to some extent, but it does not change its essential nature. The balance of power between the various sections of the exploited masses would be somewhat different here, and their transition to socialism slower—otherwise their goal as well as their initial task of overthrowing the system of capitalist-cum-feudal exploitation and rule, would remain essentially the same as in the developed capitalist countries.

Indian Recipes

It is for those who accuse us of imitating the West, to produce a truly "Indian" solution of the problems that face us. But though there has been a good deal of talk about India's peculiarities and its unique recipes for its ill, no one seems to have

taken the trouble of formulating them in intelligible language—with perhaps only one honourable exception.

As far as I am aware, Dr. Bhagwan Das is the only one among the leaders of the country, who has given serious thought to this problem, and laid before the public what he considers are Indian solutions of Indian problems. To us what is of greater value and importance than the solutions that the learned Doctor advocates, is his bold insistence on the view that the nature of Swaraj is a subject of paramount importance and calls for urgent and earnest inquiry and discussion. But apart from the socialists, the Doctor stands almost alone in holding this view.

As far as most other lovers of Indian culture are concerned, their task is finished after they have tarred us with the brush of "foreignism" and prated some nonsense about the folly of troubling about matters that concern the remote future. "Let us win Swaraj first," they say. One wonders if they see the inconsistency of their position when they attack and oppose socialism. By that action they make it clear that whatever "ism" they might accept after they have won Swaraj, they would, at least, be opposed to socialism. Apart from being a breach of the neutrality they assume, this gives a clear indication of their sympathies.

Before proceeding to consider some of the alternatives, I should like to point out the curious fact that these Indian culture enthusiasts, when they are faced with socialism, fail to show the least interest in the Manu-ite solution presented to them by Dr. Bhagwan Das. The fate of the Das-Das Swaraj Scheme is well known. And now his Ancient *versus* Modern Scientific Socialism has fallen again, it seems, on deaf ears.

To take a concrete instance. It will be recalled that at the time of the last Assembly elections, of 1934 the learned Doctor had pointed out that according to Indian traditions it was for the people to seek out their leader and ask him to legislate for them and not for "candidates" for leadership to go running about begging the people for their "votes." At that time it was not noticed that the lovers of Indian tradition welcomed Dr. Das' suggestion with any visible enthusiasm. I suspect, on the other hand, that he was looked upon by most of these gentlemen as a mere Manu-crank.

The greater part of this talk of "Indianism" is, to my mind, a mere cloak for reaction to conservatism. If the leaders of the country (with one or two exceptions) seat down today to forge out a constitution for India, I have not the least doubt that, in spite of all this condemnation of socialism as un-Indian, that constitution

would be an utter limitation of the democratic constitutions of the West.